Anthropogony, Myth and Gender: Athenian Autochthony as a Case Study

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Preface

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Di Yan
November 12, 2018

Abstract

This thesis, with its reflections on previous myth theories, especially structuralism in the 20th century and post-structuralist readings in recent decades, suggests a new approach for understanding Greek mythology. Taking Athenian autochthony as a case study, it argues that, instead of regarding Greek myth as either a narrative system with one universal logic (structuralist reading) or as an ever-changing corpus without a unified concern (post-structuralist reading), it is more plausible to understand various myths as a dynamic system of social conversation, where individual authors and different genres respond to, argue with, or even compete against one another concerning core issues for a compelling explanation and understanding of the world.

After an introduction in which I lay out my methodological concerns and the objectives of my study, the majority of the thesis is divided into four chapters, focusing on the themes of social order and gender order within the mythology of Athenian autochthony. Chapter 1, by looking at Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, provides an Archaic background for autochthony myths. It demonstrates that Archaic myth offered a tragic vision of social order in the human world, according to which a sexually active human society was unable to obtain social order. Chapter 2 deals with the myths of autochthony in the Classical period. It argues that Athenian autochthony, in revising the Archaic myth of social origin, attempts to establish a new social order for the human world as a response to the Archaic view. However, this new idea inevitably led to contemporary criticism, and myths of autochthony were subjected to sophisticated questioning. Chapters 3 and 4 thus discuss the conversation between accounts of civic autochthony and intellectual thinking in tragedy and philosophy. In Chapter 3, Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides *Ion* are examined. These two tragedies, by revising the traditional autochthony myths into new narratives, inquire into the feasibility of the mythic imagination of autochthony establishing social order in the real human world. Chapter 4 investigates Plato's *Republic*, *Timaeus* and *Critias*. In these works, myths of autochthony are repurposed again to criticize the civic idea of autochthony. Together, the four chapters demonstrate how different and competing authors and genres self-consciously revise myths, and how the mythic feature of "variation" could be manipulated powerfully and taken advantage of in the process of myth-making and theory-construction.

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This is a thesis about love, sex and procreation. Greeks always find tension in these matters. I do, too. But for the moment, I find more sweetness in them because of the expectation of the arrival of a new life. I would like to dedicate this thesis to my first child, Wang Ji who will come to the world in the coming April. I wish him happiness in his life.

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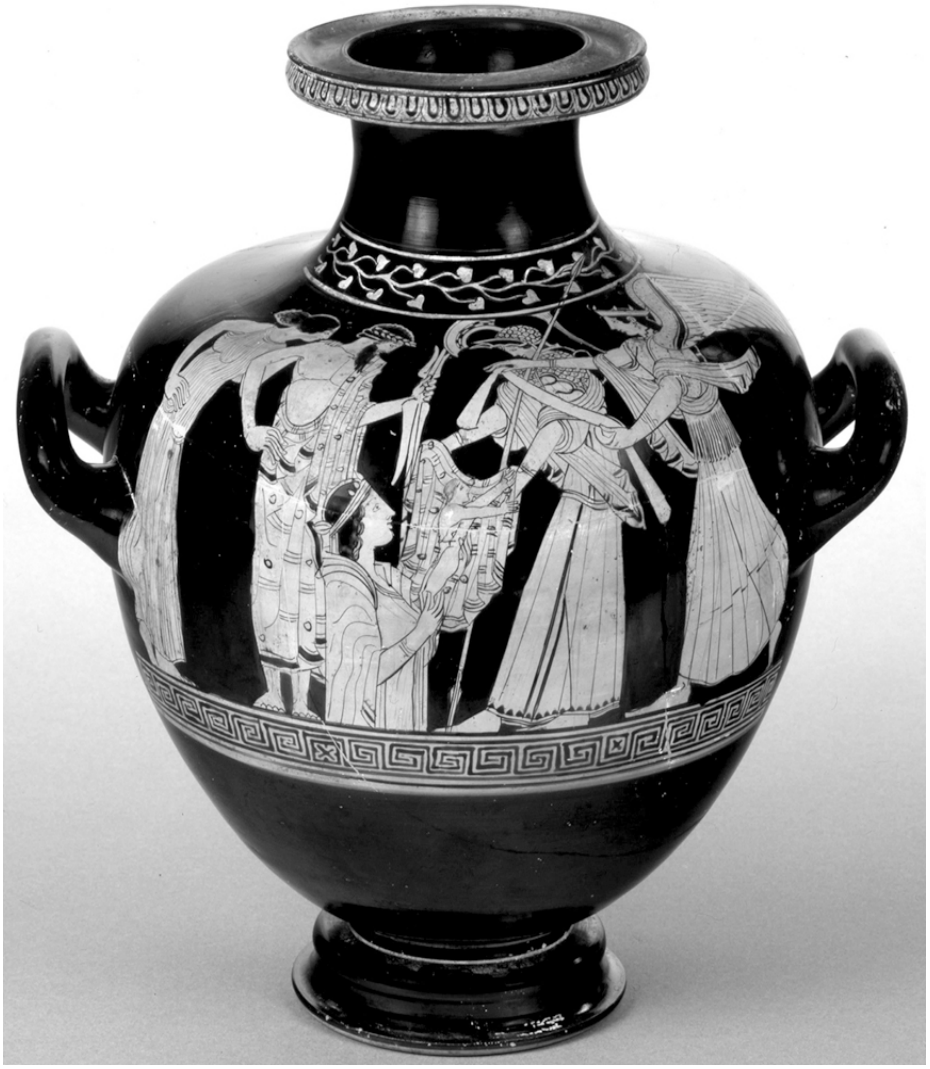

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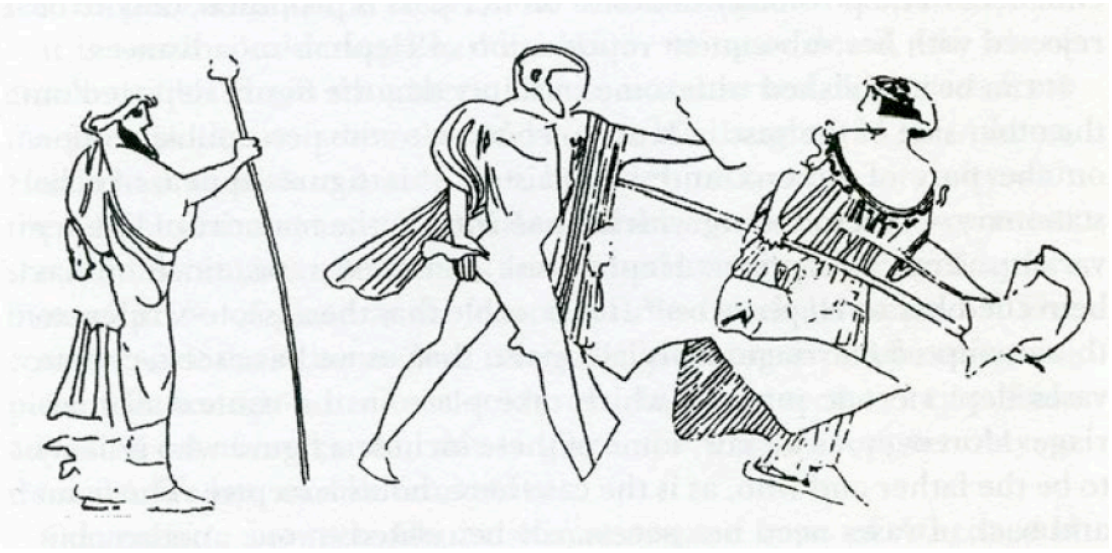

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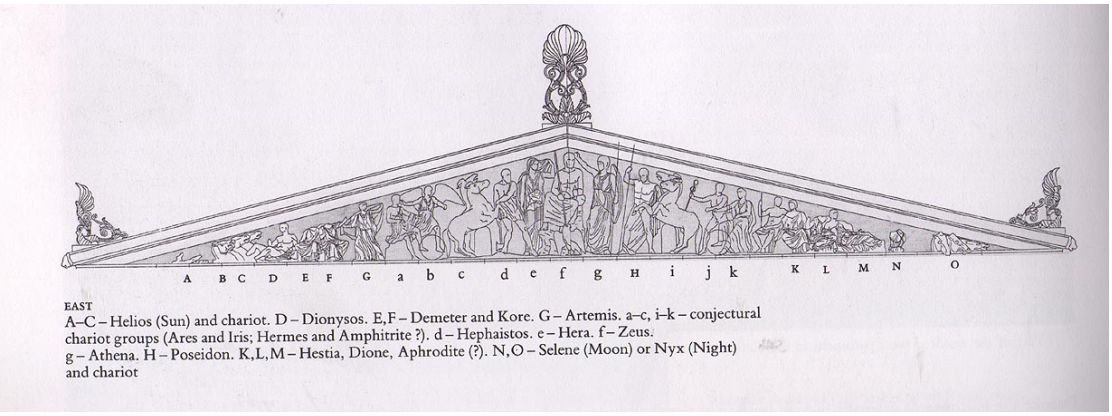

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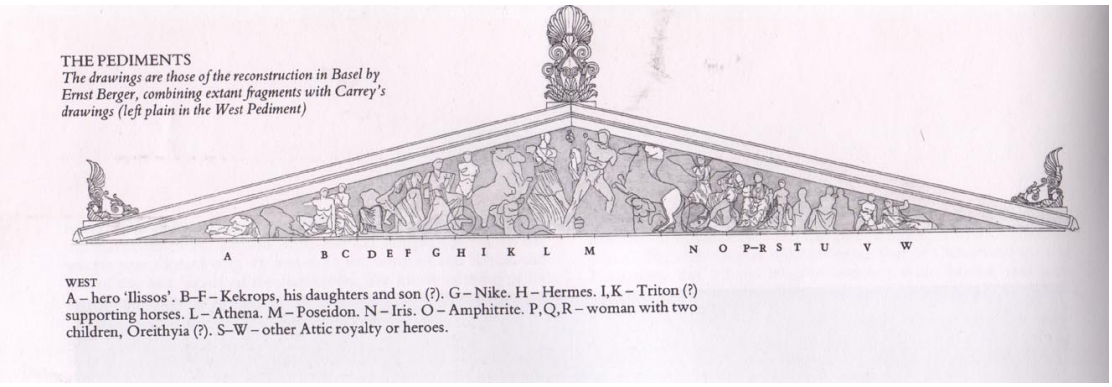

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Introduction: Reading Greek Myth

Do *mythoi* have a central single meaning which is related to a central single story? Debates over this question have lasted for centuries. The complexity of the corpus of Greek myth presents a number of intricacies which render it almost impossible to provide a complete definition of "*mythoi*".[1] Part of the difficulty in defining and understanding *mythoi* is the multiplicity and variety of Greek myth and its meaning. Not only is myth told in different genres, on different occasions, for different reasons and in different ways, but even a single mythic story may have dozens of narratives that are different from one another. How to make sense of such multiplicity and variety is a central issue that no readers of Greek myth can ignore. This thesis will participate in this central debate and aim to make a contribution to the reading of Greek myth.

The introduction to this thesis will deal with two issues: firstly, what is the contribution that this study makes to the academic field? Secondly, how is the contribution presented? In what follows, I will discuss these two issues to allow the structure of the thesis to be made clear.

The first issue: the contribution of this thesis. This thesis offers a new understanding of Greek myth and proposes a new perspective for approaching myth. In order to lay the groundwork for my proposal, it is necessary first to offer an exposition of the basic theoretical background for my methodology. Of course, given the complexity of Greek myth and the resulting myriad theories and debates on best to understand it, it would be impossible here to exhaust the history of scholarship of Greek mythology. Therefore, instead of providing a panoramic picture of myth interpretation in previous scholarship, I have selected what I consider the three most representative moments in the history of myth reading. Concerning the central issue – do *mythoi* have a central single meaning which is related to a central single story – scholarly trends in the three different time periods I will consider tended towards different standpoints. They are: comparative approaches and ritualism in the 19th century, which believed that all different myths could be either traced back or reduced to one single version with one single meaning;

[1] The result is that only some very vague and broad definitions tend to be given, employing cautious rhetoric, such as the "most banal and least controversial" one: myths are traditional tales. See Graf (1993) 1. See also similar definition by such as Kirk (1970) and Burkert (1979a).

Structuralism in the 20th century which proposed that myth, in its origin, has different versions, but that they all bear the same meaning; and poststructualist in recent decades, which rejects the idea of taking myth as a system with a universal logic, but argues instead that different versions of the same myth have different meanings. As we will see, these three moments together form the basic framework for my current reflections on myth interpretation.

In the 19th century, when the intellectual context for scholars was profoundly shaped by emerging ideas about evolution, mainstream interpretations of myth in this period also considered the development of myth in a similar fashion. Parallel to the "tree model" in contemporary historical linguistics, as found in Lachmann's theory, Comparative approaches for myth reading also aimed to find the "archetype" underlying variations of languages and myths. In arguing that many languages – and thus stories told in these languages – all originated from a lost common ancestor, and through the comparison of the descendant languages, Comparative approaches attempted to reconstruct the single origin of certain myths and religions.[2] Within this approaches, Edward Burnett Tylor's theory of evolutionism could be said to be typical of this period. His cultural anthropology, which aims at discovering "stages of development or evolution",[3] explicitly intends to trace the very origins of myths and cultures from their later variations. Max Müller was another of the foremost exponents of this kind of idea. He also employed the comparative approach, much like that of Tylor, to study diverse languages and to trace them through a single "family tree"[4] – in this way, he also sought a single origin for ancient myth which, for him, was a natural product of language.[5] This approach was not only influential in the 19th century. As we can see in later theories, that of Georges Dumézil, for example, the very idea that different myths originated from the common heritage is still dominant.[6]

Developing at the same time as the Comparative approaches, myth and ritual theory, proposed by Cambridge Ritualists (J. E. Harrison, F. M. Cornford, A. B. Cook etc.)

[2] Shippey (2005) 3-14.
[3] Tylor (1871).
[4] Müller (1854) and (1855). It is noticeable, that although Müller argued against Darwin on many specific points, he himself still acknowledged his admiration for this inaugurator of evolutionism.
[5] Müller (1866).
[6] Dumézil (1934) compared the Greek Uranos and the Sanskrit Varuna, although his etymological equation of these two was later widely considered untenable.

and others (William Robertson Smith, James Frazer), also argued in favour of diverse myths originating from a single starting point with a single meaning. However, whereas for the Comparative approaches, a stemmatic trail is favoured for tracing back multiple versions to one single origin; for Ritualism, all myths could in essence be reduced to the same story with the same meaning. There is no tree model to look for in the "origin" of mythic meaning because, for the Ritualists, "myth does not stand by itself but is tied to ritual".[7] In an extreme sense, as is argued by Smith, once the meaning of ritual is lost, the myths lost their mythic meaning.[8] This means that myth itself does not have any autonomy on its own but all its meanings – with the variations of mythic narrative developed later – in effect result from the single meaning of ritual and thus in essence the multiple meanings presented by myths could be reduced into that meaning of ritual.

As we can see, although comparative approaches and ritualism in the 19th century went in two different directions, their very understanding of Greek myth nevertheless is shown to be the same: that is, both of them thought that different myths have a single story with a single meaning that could either be traced back or reduced into one. This similarity is likely the product of the prevailing idea of evolution in this time-period, which is closely connected to the intellectual trend towards rationality, with "modern impulses towards Enlightment".[9] Approaches to mythology in this new era thus assumed that human thought must have also undergone evolution from ancient to modern, from primitive to mature, irrational to rational.[10] Therefore, we see that the "single meaning" or "single story" that was thought to underpin ancient myth according to either of the two theories was strongly associated with the primitive and irrational. This idea of myth as something primitive, struck a chord with how myth was thought to be understood even by the classical Greeks. Indeed, in the 5th century BCE, *mythos* is often placed in opposition to *logos* in the framework of "*mythos versus logos*" especially in the fields of philosophy and history –[11] where *mythos* was conceptualized as something untrue or with no deep

[7] Segal (2004) 61.
[8] Smith (1889). Segal [(2004) 62] summarizes the idea of Smith: many of the myths that have come down to us arose "after the original, nonmythic reason [...] for the ritual had somehow been forgotten."
[9] Most (1999) 25.
[10] For a general discussion of the mythology in 19th century, see Graf (1993).
[11] Thucydides, I. 5. 3, I. 21-22, II, 22.4, cf. the commentary by Polybius II. 56, 7-12. Plato, *Republic*, 337a, 552a8, *Timaeus*, 26e5, *Gorgias*, 527a4, *Phaedrus*, 61b, *Cratylus* 408c. For

meaning. This framework could naturally be adapted for the 19th century understanding of myth. This framework continued to remain in later time a fundamental feature of the intellectual debate either as something with which to agree, or as something against which to rebel.

In the 20th century, ideas about myth underwent a dramatic change. As I have mentioned above, in the 19th century, myth was regarded as something primitive and irrational; in the 20th century, such a thought was strongly rejected. In the new era, *mythos* became something with deep meaning. However, rather than simply dispelling the 19th century framework of "*mythos versus logos*", where *mythos* was something primitive, instead, in the 20th century, *mythos* rather became a kind of *logos,* i.e. something rational.

This shift in approach and understanding made a focus on the mythic narrative itself more important. Among the new approaches,[12] Lévi-Strauss and his French school of Structuralism is the most dominant.[13] Structuralism distinguished mythic thought and mythic narrative and argued that, at the superficial level, mythic narratives centred on one theme vary; but at a deeper level, they all convey the same rational meaning. In other words, for Structuralism, myth in its origin has different versions atemporally (i.e. not in the tree model any more) but they all bear the same meaning. One of Lévi-Strauss' most famous examples is the case of Oedipus,[14] in which the problem of birth is a constant issue that repeatedly crops up in the wider Oedipus myth. Lévi-Strauss argued that blood relationships between the family members are always disturbed by abnormal reproduction, either as a deficient form of "birth from the one", as in the case of Cadmus in the Theban autochthony, or as a twisted form of "birth from the two", as in the case of Oedipus and Jocasta. Here even though there are a number of different stories, centred

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modern scholarship on this issue, see Williams(2002) 151, Fowler (2011), Morgan (2000), Schefer (1999), Lincoln (1996), (1999).

[12] Besides Structuralism, also popular in the 20th century are psychoanalysis, symbolism, functionalism, which aim to find the universal truth in myth. For myth and Psychoanalysis, see Freud (1900), (1912), Abraham (1909), Rank (1909), Jung (1963), (1964). For symbolism: following Creuzer (1810). See also Cassirer (1957), Van Der Leeuw (1948), Otto (1947). For functionalism: Malinowski (1922), (1926), Harrison (1912), (1913), (1921), Dumézil (1939), (1954).

[13] Lévi-Strauss (1949), (1958), (1962), Vernant (1980), (1983), Detienne (1972), (1986), Detienne & Vernant (1978), Vidal-Naquet (1968), Propp (2010), Burkert (1979b), See Gordon (1981)'s collection of Structuralist works, too.

[14] Lévi-Strauss (1955).

around Thebes and Oedipus, the same basic idea of "birth from one or two" appears in all these narratives – the mythic cycle is a system with its own universal logic of thinking regardless of the time difference of the composition of individual stories.

Lévi-Strauss' theory is influential, and could be said to be the core idea of the entirety of Structuralism. His reading of Greek myth, which attempts to treat every individual version equally, constituted a challenge to the more philologically oriented approach of the previous century, which endowed certain versions with higher status and priority. However, new problems arise. Too much emphasis on the "single deeper meaning" and the structure of myth in effect devalues the mythic narrative *per se*. As is criticised by Vernant, one problem for Lévi-Strauss' idea is that it takes myth only as a kind of logical tool expounding upon a particular idea (e.g. "birth from one or two" in the Oedipus myths) and in doing so, myth as a narrative form loses its significance.[15] Myth, at any rate, is a kind of narrative, no matter what deeper meaning it contains. Taking a different route from Lévi-Strauss, Vernant then modified the rigidity of structuralism. He called for serious attention to the narrative side of myth and suggested deciphering the universal logic of myth proposed by Lévi-Strauss *through* various levels of narratives, with due respect being paid to the textual and social contexts.[16] By distinguishing

[15] Vernant pointed out that in fact in Lévi-Strauss' own work such a problem has already been shown. Whereas in his study of Oedipus in his "Structural Study of Myth", Lévi-Strauss could temporarily ignore the social and textual context of this myth and just draw out a universal logic structure, in his own field of anthropology, such as in the works *La Geste d'Asdiwal* and *Mythologiques*, he could no longer just pay attention to an abstract structure but had to take into account social conditions and material diversity and had to admit that "to reveal the structure of the myth…is only made possible by a precise and exhaustive knowledge of the myth's cultural and ethnographical context". This is why many readers felt the ambiguity of Lévi-Strauss' theory which "presents, as it were, two theories of myth, the one superposed upon the other". Vernant (1980) 230. Besides Vernant, there are other critiques of Lévi-Strauss' work, for example, Nathorst (1968), Makarius (1973), Thomas, Kronenfeld and Kronenfeld (1976), Detienne (1972) and Mandelbaum (1987). Although Lévi-Strauss has argued against those accusations stating that the variation of narrative and the universal structure are simply two sides or two states in a single operation, Vernant does not think that he has resolved the essential problem.

[16] A three-step reading of myth was suggested by him: (1) from narrative to structure: firstly study the myth in all the detail of its textual form and then get to understand the "grammar" of the story, that is the logic behind the narrative; (2) from structure to narrative: to match the "grammar" of the story and the semantic content, i.e. all the details in myths were read to confirm the semantic configurations; (3) social context: finally to locate the myth in its rightful place in the context of mental and social history. Vernant (1980) 236. His interpretation of the story of Prometheus in *Hesiod* (1980 ch.2) shows

"between many different forms and levels of mythical expression",[17] Vernant's theory attempted to bring the significance of narrative back onto the stage.

However, Vernant's attempt turned out still to be rather limited within the framework of structuralism, seemingly lacking a real trust in the narrative and never granting it autonomy on its own terms. No matter how much attention Vernant paid to those various narratives, his final aim was still to show the *single meaning* in them, the same as his predecessor, Lévi-Strauss; he still left the real significance of those narrative variations uninterpreted. In this sense, his understanding of myth shares more in common with the other structuralist theories in the 20th century rather than being fundamentally different from them. As Buxton criticizes, even Vernant cannot avoid the tendency of "shifting towards rationality".[18] In other words, even in Vernant, the central belief that there is one deep meaning and logic structure in the system of mythic narratives still remained unchanged.

However, although Vernant's theory is still essentially limited within the framework of structuralism, his emphasis on the mythic narrative indeed helped to push myth reading in a new direction. This brings us to the third period of scholarly discussion that I would like to consider: poststruaulist. In this most recent period of time, there were two prominent tendencies in almost all the new works: firstly, readers made a great effort to go beyond the comfort zone of the 20th century's methodological tradition; and secondly, variation of mythic narrative received direct attention.

As we have discussed above, one of the crucial methodological roots of Structuralism's rationality in the 20th century is the transformed framework of "*mythos versus logos*" – which, as we have seen above, was largely derived from a Greek 5th century BCE understanding of myth, and then adopted by scholars in the 19th century. In recent decades, this framework has been greatly questioned, because etymologically speaking, *mythos* before the 5th century had little to do with the opposition between *mythos* and *logos* where the former is something untrue or fabulous, but rather just a kind of

exactly these three steps. Vernant's approach is still very influential today and, as we will see later, some of the most important scholarship concerning our case study of autochthony myth in this thesis is still based on it.

[17] Vernant (1980) 235.

[18] Buxton (1999) 1-3.

formulated speech in the domain of *legein*.[19] So for many scholars, to take "*mythos versus logos*" as the basic framework for a search for a universal logic of myth, while ignoring the real significance of the mythic narrative (i.e. the *legein*), becomes not only problematic but also misleading.

Richard Buxton's collection *From Myth to Reason?*, with the eye-catching question mark in the title, put forward a challenge against the well-accepted traditional framework.[20] Robert Fowler argued that the ancient distinction of *mythos* and *logos* began in the time of the Sophists, not Plato, and that the meaning of each term had a complicated, context-sensitive history, offering points of both convergence and divergence in comparison with the traditional construction.[21] Geoffrey Lloyd, by comparing Greek myth with Chinese myth, reminded his readers that the current concept of myth is actually a westernized idea constructed from 5th century Greece.[22] Claude Calame is even more radical. He not only questioned but explicitly rejected taking the concept of *mythos* as a meaningful category at all.[23] As we can see, all of these works were attempting to re-understand myth beyond the framework that was fixed in the last century. Under these efforts, the structuralist aim of finding a single deeper meaning (*logos*) as something opposed to the superficial narrative of myth (*mythos*) becomes more problematic.

These reflections led to a return to the *legein*, i.e. the various narratives of myth, the issue foregrounded by Vernant. But it should be noted that the new attempt to understand the narrative in this period of time is distinctly different from the approach of Vernant. One prominent difference is that whereas Vernant still took the single deeper meaning as the goal of myth reading, the poststructualist approach tries to deal with the narrative itself without looking for an assumed universal meaning, since, for the latter approach, every single narrative has *its own meaning*, each of which can be different. In other words, there is no universal meaning anymore and the variation itself is and should be the final goal of myth interpretation.

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[19] For study on the archaic use of the term "*mythos*", see Vernant (1980), Nagler (1989), Schibli (1999), Lincoln (1999), Martin (1989), Bettini (2006), Fowler (2011).
[20] Buxton (1999). In this collection of articles, the logic of "from myth to reason" is examined from different angles.
[21] Fowler (2011) and (1996). Cf. Marincola (1997), Thomas (2000), Bakker, De Jong and Wees (2002), Dewald and Maricola (2006).
[22] Lloyd (1999), (2002) and (2004).
[23] Calame (1999), (2003) and (2008).

Early in 1994, Buxton published his *Imaginary Greece, the Contexts of Mythology*, in which he sought to demonstrate that the endless variations of Greek mythology are actually each the product of a particular community, which is situated in a particular landscape and in particular institutions.[24] A more recent collection of articles on Greek religion entitled *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*, published in 2016, also emphasized the significance of mythic variation. In the richly informed introduction, the editors elaborated the idea of taking the plural form of "theologies" instead of its single form to define Greek religion as well as Greek myth. They stressed "the need to acknowledge theological variety", attempting to "find a way of understanding how Greek theologies worked together without having recourse to the unsatisfactory [dualistic] oppositions" and to find a place for real "difference".[25] In 2017, Fowler made a speech on "What is in a Myth?" for his presidential address at the annual conference of the classical Association, in which he proposed to value the flexibility, multiplicity and mutation of myth, and to take story-telling and world explanation as "a single but multifarious phenomenon" that changes all the time in different contexts.[26] The work by Lowell Edmunds in 2014 shared a similar idea and is even more illuminating. In his new introduction to the second edition of his *Approaches to Greek Myth*, Edmunds not only stressed that variation of myth on its own terms is the very nature of Greek mythology, but also suggested that the so-called creation of myth is in effect the variation of mythic telling in oral performance: individual authors of myth could and would adapt mythic narrative actively according to certain contexts and audiences.[27]

This new direction of myth reading is groundbreaking as, for the first time, the diverse narratives in the Greek world of myth have received direct attention. However, I still hesitate to adopt this approach wholesale. One problem that I see in those proposals above is that such a post-structuralist theory – or more radically speaking, poststructualist – with an over-emphasis on the mobility of myth, without a reserved place for "what is coherent", could lead to a rather fragmented picture. The editors of *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion* have also observed such a problem. They turned back

[24] See also his work in later years: Buxton (2009), (2013). Cf. Lowe (2000), de Jong (2014), Boyd (2009), Geertz and Jensen (2011).
[25] Eidinow, Kindt and Osborne (2016) 10.
[26] Fowler (2017), esp. pp. 11-17.
[27] It would be interesting to compare the more recent attention to oral tradition to the previous idea of looking at myth based on the written work, for example, Vernant (1980).

to the the issue of "unity" at the end of their introduction: "The question of the existence of a theology (or theologies) of ancient Greek religion is ultimately the question of the unity of religious structures behind what may at first sight look like a bewildering array of religious beliefs and practices."[28] However, in their "place for difference",[29] this question is proposed only briefly for the purpose of opening up discussion, instead of being their core concern, and so is not pursued further.

Myth, after all, is a product of a society and a system of culture. It is true that, as has been argued in the above theories, myth varies in different social and textual contexts and thus can have different meanings – but how can we make sense of this variation *per se*? Why is this version narrated in this way and that version in that way? Are there some traces of the mutation of myth or does the variation just happen arbitrarily and individually without any rationale of change, as indicated in some theories of poststrucualitst?

In facing these questions, I will have to depart from the previous theories. As far as I see Greek myth, the multiple narratives are not formed in an arbitrary way but instead with a traceable rationale behind the transformations. This rationale, as I will argue throughout the thesis, is that the various narratives are all composed within a comprehensive network of Greek world of myth, which essentially is a field of *conversation* where different authors, various genres and diverse discourses respond to, argue with, or even compete against one another concerning core issues. Our job then, in reading Greek myth, is to understand what is the shared concern of certain sets of myths and then to see how these myths exchange ideas concerning that theme with one another through their narrative mutations.

Essentially speaking, my proposal attempts to find a place between the three views that I have discussed above, all of which are plausible in some parts but are questionable in others. In relation to the 19th century's reading, I would not reject its insight into the deep connection between the origin of myth and psychological development in humanity's early stage, but I would not accept the view that myth is just primitive and irrational, or reducible to a single core meaning. In this respect, I follow the view of Structuralism in the 20th century, which has convincingly shown that there is deep meaning inherent to mythic narrative. In regard to Structuralism, while I do agree

[28] Eidinow, Kindt and Osborne (2016) 10.
[29] *Ibid*. 10.

that all the narratives are equal and that there is a systematic process underlying the variation of myth, I reject the idea that this constitutes a universal logic applicable to all the mutations of myth. Instead, in such a field of change and exchange, there is no universal "truth" underpinning myth in the sense of structuralism (i.e. settled, fully-accepted and paramount structure) – what is shared in the system are some basic themes concerning fundamental issues. In the various versions of myth, truth and structure are not fixed but are always objects of debate. The truth – perhaps better called "mythic meaning"– lies in *every single version* in its *specificity*, *historicity*, *contemporality* and *diversity*, in its exposure to time and space, to different contexts and different minds. And in comparison with poststrucatulist, I concur that the narrative varies and different narratives may convey different meanings; however, I hesitate to go so far as its fragmented reading – I still hold that there are some basic themes, i.e. core interests in the systematic mutation of myth. It is based on those core interests that myths are used and re-used in different ways to express different meanings. With different narrative elements added, changed or manipulated in mythic presentation, different authors, genres and discourses not only shed new light on those common issues but also speak and compete with one another for a better and more powerful interpretation.

Furthermore, my proposal for understanding myth as a field of conversation is also a response to the widely discussed issue of "*mythos versus logos*" that has occupied scholars' attention for centuries. As we have seen above, the concept of *mythos* changed dramatically in the 5th century, which exerts a huge influence upon the both ancient and modern reception of myth. There is no need to repeat the problematic view of those theories which takes the 5th century's notion as their methodological basis, but what is interesting here is that this change in the concept of myth is also part of *mythic conversation*. As I have mentioned above, the original opposition between *mythos* and *logos* started in the field of philosophy and history in 5th century BCE, when the ideas of truth (*alētheia*) and history (*historia*) became an intellectual concern. With new understanding of these issues, philosophers and historians challenged the old intellectual world. And they came up with the new notion of *mythos* as a response, a conversation, a debate and a challenge to their predecessors. Taking advantage of the feature of myth as a field of change and exchange, philosophers and historians adapted previous myths for their own purposes, and thus changed the history of myth. Here we see how powerful the

mutation of myth can be, and how dramatically the change of myth leads to a change in the notion of what myth means.

Now I have made clear my view of myth, let us turn to the second issue: how my proposal is presented in this thesis. In order to show the mechanism of myth as a field of change and exchange, I would like to take one famous set of myths in the ancient Greek world as a case study: autochthony in classical Athens. In the following chapters I will examine how autochthony as a mythic narrative is used, manipulated, revised and reflected by different agents in different genres and how altogether they form a rich world of conversation.

A brief introduction to Athenian autochthony and its significance: autochthony is a term that was widely used in Athens and other *poleis* between the 6th and 4th century BCE.[30] Αὐτόχθων, etymologically speaking, means to be born automatically from the earth. Our earliest literary attestation of this term is found in Homer's *Iliad* book 2, where it is used to address the founder king of Athens Erechtheus,[31] but it was not until the late 6th century BCE that it found popularity throughout the Greek world. The abrupt prevalence of references to autochthony in the panhellenic world is, as is accepted by most scholars, largely driven by the development of the *polis* as well as the huge movement of immigration and colonization since the 7th century BCE. A utilitarian use of αὐτόχθων – born from [that specific] land – proved to be effective way for immigrants to declare their natural right to inhabit certain land.[32] Therefore, from the beginning of the classical period, it was not uncommon to see a Greek *polis* tracing its history back autochthonically and making an *indigenous claim* with the rhetoric of chthonic birth.

Among all of these autochthonous discourses, Athenian autochthony appears to be very special. Although this autochthony also shares the common idea of indigenous

[30] Autochthony is a popular term in the panhellenic world. There were many other claims of autochthony, such as that of Thebes (*Spartoi*), Sparta (Lelex), Lokrian (Lokros), Asios of Samos and so on. Also it is interesting to note that the second king of Troy is called Erichthonius (Homer, the *Iliad* 20.215-234). On other cities' creation of autochthony, see, for example, Fragoulaki (2013) 17 and Roy (2014) 247-50.

[31] *Il.* 2. 547-8.

[32] The idea of indigenous nature and Athenian identity is greatly elaborated by Herodotus (8.44.2) and Thucydides (2.35-46). See Cohen (2000) 92. For comprehensive and nuanced discussion about the use of indigenous autochthony, see Rosivach (1987); Gruen (2011) 236, 239-40. See also Turner (2014) 89, Geschiere (2009) 10-12, Pelling (2009), Geschiere and Jackson (2006), Geschiere (2009), Forsdyke (2012), Blok (2009a), (2009b), Dench (1995).

inhabitation, it otherwise developed fully a group of *myths* concerning life stories of Athenian autochthonous ancestors who are believed to be earth-born (Kekrops, Erichthonius and Erechtheus), which go far *beyond* the literal meaning of "being born from the earth" and present a much broader view of the society as a whole.[33] Even more notable is that these myths became so popular in Athens in the classical period that they could be seen almost everywhere in the city, from prose to drama, poetry to philosophy, vase painting to architecture,[34] and with all these presentations on social issues autochthony gained a very high status in the city: it was regarded as "a charter myth" of Athens, one of the most important myths for the society – and of course, because of this, Athenian autochthony is also seen as a fundamentally significant study area in modern scholarship and has been well discussed in the past thirty years.[35]

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[33] Therefore, my understanding of autochthony is much broader than most current schoalrs' view: it is not only a term for indigeneous claim, i.e., "birth from the earth", but also a term which could refer to all the myths and stories concerning autochthonous figures, such as that of Kerkops, Erichthonius and Erechtheus. Myths of autochthony could be said to be an Athenian invention. Although the term αὐτόχθων could be seen almost everywhere in Greece, autochthonous myths were rarely found outside Athens. One exception might be the Theban *Spartoi* which tells a story of the first generation of Theban warriors born from the earth out of the teeth of a serpent. However, as far as we know, this myth was well-known as a story on its own terms but received no further intellectual attention by Thebans, as autochthonous myths did by the Athenians. And ironically enough, whereas Thebes did not seem to value the *Spartoi* so much, this story instead attracted Athenians eyes, especially on stage as an anti-type of Athenian autochthony – which interestingly shows how zealous Athens' pursuit is of this mythic discourse. It would not be unjust to say that the significance of the Theban *Spartoi* was not fully explored in Thebes until it was picked up by Athens. On *Spartoi* as an anti-type of Athenian autochthony, see Detienne (2001-2002), Zeitlin (1990), Nimis (2007) 408 and Loraux (2000) 56-57, and most resently Clements (2015) 26-29.

[34] It is imperative to clarify that my understanding of mythic "narrative" as a presentation of mythic thinking can be both literal and material. Therefore, for me, mythic narrative includes not only literature, but also all kinds of manifestation of those stories, such as vase paintings, sculptures or even the construction of architecture. Parker [(1987) 191-92] suggests that autochthony became a favourite subject for vase painters especially from about 570-530 BCE, and the popularity of these artistic representations declines around 460 BCE. Besides vase paintings, we also see autochthony appearing as a central theme in the Parthenon temple, tragedies and comedies, political speeches and philosophical discussions during the 5th and 4th centuries. For autochthony in Athenian art, see also Bérard (1974) 31-38. Regarding the popularity of the myths, Sissa and Detienne [(2000) 140-43] point out that in fact autochthony took several generations to establish its narrative. However, it was indeed during this specific time that autochthony thrived. Autochthony is thus essentially an invention of 5th century Athens. See also Rosivach (1987) 295, Loraux (1993) and (1986) 148-50.

[35] For autochthony scholarship, see my discussion in chapter 2.

But besides the crucial status of autochthony in both the ancient world and in modern academia, there are three other very important motivations for me to choose it as my case study. The first and most crucial reason is that autochthony is one of the best examples for my criticism of the myth theories that I have discussed above. In current studies, a highly influential reading of autochthony, as is widely accepted, is the structuralist interpretation by the French scholar Nicole Loraux, who was a former research director at the Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), the noted centre of French School of Structuralism. As a representative of structuralist study, Loraux's work shows the quintessence of the Structuralist approach, especially that of Vernant, but also its weakness. In conversation with Loraux's work, my interpretation of autochthony illustrates my reflections on the previous myth theories as well as my own methodological concern. In doing so, I hope that I will make a contribution to both the current scholarship of mythology and the interpretation of this specific set of myths.

As I have suggested, Loraux's interpretation of autochthony is a typical structuralist reading. One prominent feature of autochthony for Loraux is the idea that autochthony in classical Athens is a fixed thought. Through looking at the deeper meaning conveyed in the myth, Loraux argued that this mythic discourse is a stable *political ideology* which powerfully advocated Athenian democracy as a good form of political life.[36] Taking up the old Structuralist concern in Greek myth – born from one or born from two – Loraux formed her argument as a continuation of Lévi-Strauss' Oedipus complex. By interpreting the birth of Erichthonius from the earth, i.e. the child is born from one, Loraux proposed that this myth excludes women from the reproductive cycle, and thereby forms a straightforward reflection of the historical exclusion of the female from the male-only political sphere.[37]

Indeed, autochthony is a good entry point for Loraux's structuralist view. As autochthony is itself a myth of origin and genealogy, its stories of how things come to be can be an expression of how things always are. Genealogy thus generates structure and civic ideology. With a plausible comparison between the meaning of founding stories and the historical political thought in classical Athens, a continuity and parallel between the

[36] For similar political reading of autochthony, see, for example, Forsdyke (2012), Nimis (2007). Many studies of autochthony in Africa and Europe also tend to follow Loraux's interpretation, see Geschiere and Jackson (2006).
[37] See also Rosivach (1987), Nimis (2007).

genealogy and ideology is established. When myths of origin are told as a civic language for the sake of the city, this language is not only endowed with a strong sense of stability but also in turn helps to strengthen such a stability.

It is at this point that Loraux stated explicitly her debt to Lévi-Straussian theory: "given Lévi-Strauss' claim that successive versions of a myth should be treated as variants of that myth, I extended his argument to include the coexistence of different versions of the same myth within a single city".[38] So what we see in Loraux's reading is that there is always a pursuit of a stable meaning and she treated all the various versions of autochthonous myths as a coherent unity.[39] No matter how myths of autochthony vary, they all share the same meaning which express the same idea, the same structure, and the same ideology that could be seen in the history of Athens: birth from the one.

As a historian, in emphasizing the social and historical context of autochthony, Loraux indeed appears to pay attention to the contemporality and historicity of myth. However, Loraux's argument in effect does not really touch the significance of historicity. On the contrary, by linking the idea of autochthony exclusively to a single political agenda, her reading of myth unavoidably goes back to a structuralist logic in a teleological and functional fashion – something that we have already criticized in the case of Vernant's revised structuralism which also noticed social context but failed to bring out the significance of mythic narrative. The result is that autochthony once again becomes an abstract idea to be matched to another idea (democracy). The history itself becomes the goal of a united structure, and narratives of myth *per se* become something to be forgotten.

What is more worrying is that the ideology that Loraux argued for does not necessarily present the whole or even a true picture of autochthony. One prominent weakness of Loraux's reading is that, in order to fit the meaning of myth into the predetermined framework, only privileged elements of a certain type are chosen while those which cannot be explained right away by the theory are simply discarded or ignored.[40] For instance, Loraux only examined a few select points from the earth-born

[38] Loraux (1993) 8.

[39] Loraux exhibits a degree of neglect towards the issue of version. At the start of her book (1989), Loraux categorized a series of stories of autochthonous myth. These categories are her own invention, and in her use of materials Loraux never explained why she has selected the narrative by author A not author B.

[40] This is a common problem from which a number of theories of myth reading suffer. See Csapo (2005)'s criticism in his introduction.

story of Erichthonius and formulated most of her arguments from these, without sufficient consideration of other two narratives, those of Kekrops and Erechtheus-Poseidon, which are in fact no less fundamental for understanding autochthony. And even in the myth of Erichthonius, since Loraux only focused on certain information useful to the δῆμος-centric reading, some of her arguments are problematic. For example, in the birth of autochthony, i.e. the myth of Erichthonius, although Loraux is correct that the human female is excluded, she ignores that the human male is also absent in the procreation – if the story excludes the human mother, it excludes the human father, too. Then how can such a birth be straightforwardly understood to be representative of the exclusion of women?

For the moment, we have only looked at Loraux's reading of some popular versions of mythic narrative, and we have not discussed yet how rich the variation of the narrative throughout time can be, and how these mutations could, in different contexts, lead to different meanings. In this respect, Loraux's theory will encounter more difficulties in my thesis, as I will show especially in chapters 3 and 4, where we will see that the repurposing of autochthony by different authors and in different genres brings out not a confirmation of traditional thought but a questioning, a challenging and even a subversion of it.

Loraux's neglect of the richness of the narrative is to some degree understandable. Myth *per se* is not the purpose of her reading – it is only a tool, as she herself declared. When she meant to link the term autochthony to one historical phenomenon for the sake of her *historical study*, she would certainly find it more plausible to only look at some select points in favour of that phenomenon. This is why, in Loraux's study, the logic that is extracted from the narrative could then be applied to other things, such as her reading of funeral oration, where only the abstract idea of "earthly birth" appears a few times but the very narrative of myth is absent.

But by being narrowly connected to historical reality, myth as a field on its own term has lost its autonomy and dynamics, which, as we have argued repeatedly, are the core feature of Greek mythology. For a historian, to present a full scope of mythic narrative, especially those ever-changing dynamics in it, might be too excessive a demand. However, what is dangerous in *our* taking Loraux's reading as a full-fledged picture of autochthonous *myth as myth* – this is what almost all the current scholarship is doing – is that we are taking the risk of losing a real sense of the significance of Athenian

autochthony in its mythical world. As we will see, even if it is true that autochthony in its popularity supported the political ideology of democracy where male citizens dominate the right of speech,[41] this aspect can only be one out of many views concerning autochthony in the wide picture of mythic mutation.

There are other concerns, which are even more crucial within the autonomic mythic world and worth our attention. In my previous criticism of Loraux's study, I have refused to follow her simplified idea of taking autochthony merely as a fixed political ideology of the historical democracy, since myth is much more diverse and dynamic than history. Now I would like to further note that this set of myths, and their variations, is concerned about a much broader issue: society in its entirety. As I will show, all the conversations and contestations over autochthony are rooted in social issues, such as social formation, social order, social justice, social function etc., both *within* and *without* the historical sphere.[42] It is this broader scope that allows mythic narrative to be as mobile as possible and also makes it crucial for Greek thinking.

This leads to my second motivation for taking autochthony as a case study: the theme of autochthony is itself crucial for our understanding of ancient Greek thought. What is most interesting in autochthony, for me, is a point that Loraux failed to understand properly in her central argument: social order and social change in the story of genealogy. As far as I can understand from my reading of the autochthonous myths, the central concern is in essence not *the* stable ideology but – exactly the opposite – a *tension* between stability and instability. Although Loraux is right to point out that autochthony is a myth of origin, i.e. genealogy, which aims at establishing social order and social justice, she did not acknowledge that, as I will explain later, this genealogy (of "how things come to be") in Greek thought is in essence itself a source of change. What Loraux

[41] This radical version is that men suppress women to an extreme degree in the sexual community. Women live in society but are deprived of their voice in decision making. This deprivation, however, is by no means an expulsion: as Pericles notoriously says, it is better for women to be "silent" (*Thuc.* 2. 45. 2) – but not absent.

[42] This is definitely not to say that myth is no longer a product of history – I have argued that the historicity and contemporality of myth is one of its crucial natures – but that myth has its own sense of history. Composed in specific space and time, myth to some extent could reflect social change and social thought. For example, as I will argue, the idea of autochthony in classical times, in respect to human society, is very different from the archaic view, and this is mostly because Athens, with its great success in the 5th century, became more confident. However, even so, myth can hardly be taken specifically as a practical ideology or discourse for society, as it is always subject to rapid change.

fundamentally misunderstood is that the context of autochthony is not a male-only sphere but a normal sexual society where both men and women take action. Because of this sexual framework, the genealogical pattern by nature would cause change, conflict and instability:[43] there is no fixed pattern of "birth from one", but instead, we find many other possibilities, namely that one may be born from two or even three. Because of this, genealogy cannot be directly equaled to ideology (of "how things should be") as is argued by Loraux, but on the contrary, as we will see, throughout the entirety of mythic thinking, from the archaic Hesiod all the way to the classical Plato, there is always a tension between these two points. Since genealogy (and society in general) is itself a system of change, then how can one establish a stable order without change in such an unstable system? In other words, how do the stories of change work to create a sense of stability?

As we will see, this is a very important issue which is present in all of the variations in and conversations about autochthony. I will thus take this as the central theme of my thesis. Now I would like to present a brief picture of my myth reading in each chapter so that the autochthonous concern of "social order and social change" can be more elaboratedly shown.

Long before the popularity of classical autochthony, the issue of "social order and social change in genealogy" was formed. In chapter 1, I will offer this background as the context for Athenian thought on autochthony. From the very origin of the cosmos in Hesiod, the paradoxical thinking of social origin and social order could be seen: in the process of genealogy, on the one hand, there is a natural tendency towards change; but on the other hand, there is also a strong hope for the removal of such a change. This logic is explicitly shown in the succession story in the *Theogony*: while the aim of social formation is social order, which requires stability and no change, the pattern of social formation otherwise necessarily leads to social instability because uncontrollable desire (Eros) would trigger sexual union, sexual union would lead to procreation, and the procreated children can cause both social development and change. So every time erotic desire and sexual intercourse occur between the male and the female, resulting in the procreation of children for the formation of society, the result is change, conflict and

[43] This is one crucial point that Loraux misunderstood: throughout the mythic narrative, none of the autochthonous myths has given up the sexual context of genealogy for the sake of political ideology, even in the story of earth-born Erichthonius. On the contrary, sexual context is not only preserved in the myth but also sets up the basic framework for the mutation of myth and its further intellectual probing.

social turbulence which paradoxically interrupt the aim of social order. A tragic view of human society could thus be seen in the *Works and Days*: since human society could not get rid of sexual procreation and erotic desire, which potentially lead to instability, social order can hardly be established in such a sexual world.

It is this tragic view that triggered the response from Athenian autochthony later in the classical period. With the development of cities, the basic understanding of the mythic world has experienced a profound transformation from the archaic to classical era. As I will argue in chapter 2, in the new era, popular thought about civic autochthony made a great effort to resolve the paradox inherent in the archaic pattern of genealogy, and thus formed a conversation with archaic social thinking. One crucial point in this system of civic autochthony is that, despite different versions with different details, all the mythic narratives focus on the same topic and deal with the issue of "social change and social stability". And in these narratives, as we will see, attempts are made to establish a stable social order in sexual society. Although desire, sex, children and women are still present, through the formation of a hierarchy of gender order, in which the male becomes superior to the female, sexual conflict and social change are violently controlled in the new narrative of social myth. In this way, Athenian autochthony in the classical period presents a conscious revision of archaic myth, and it serves as a good example for us to see how people had conversations with one another concerning one central issue through the narration and re-narration of myth across space and time.

However, the conversation did not occur only between myths in different time periods diachronically. Synchronically, as we will see in chapters 3 and 4, mythic conversations also happened within one historical period among different genres and authors. As I have indicated above, autochthony is never simply an ideology – besides the most commonly shared civic thoughts, there are other versions which encountered not confirmation but prompted inquiries and challenges to the popular understanding of autochthony. I have chosen tragedy and philosophy as two examples. In chapter 3, we will see that in the mind of tragedians, the ideal situation imagined in the civic autochthony as is discussed in chapter 2 becomes highly questionable. Through revising popular autochthonous myths into different tragic versions, problems are revealed with using autochthony to maintain social order in the real human world. As is shown by both Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Ion*, to completely establish a stable social order in sexual society is not achievable since the most fundamental threats to social change and

disorder that were a concern in the archaic period still remain: uncontrollable desire, sex, children and women. As long as the basic pattern of genealogy and social formation does not change, the essential paradox of social order and social change would never be eliminated.

In conversation with his predecessors and contemporaries, Plato the philosopher attempted to offer a more radical response, as we will see in chapter 4. Like tragedians, Plato also saw all the problems in thinking about the civic autochthony. But unlike the former who still made their inquiries within the mythic tradition formed in the archaic period, Plato in his *Republic*, *Timaeus* and *Critias* challenged the entire tradition of mythic thinking. For him, the real difficulty of the establishment of order in human society lies in the paradoxical mythic thinking *per se*. As the idea of genealogy in social thinking itself leads to an irresolvable contrast between the pattern of social formation (unstable change) and its aim (stable order), this very thought is itself problematic. In revising myths of autochthony, Plato proposed a brand new sociology and genealogy to set up a real stable social order. In his new autochthonous myth, as we will see, social order naturally exists from the very beginning, and the entire pattern of the traditional genealogy is subverted: although there are still sex, children and women, what is lacking in sexual society is the uncontrollable desire which triggers irrational sexual union and endless unpredictable change. Without desire, now the genealogy becomes a controllable, rational and even intellectual plan. In this way, social change does not lead to instability but becomes the foundation of stability. Although Plato's thought is much more intricate than what is summarised here, as I will elaborate later, my central point in looking at both tragedy and philosophy has been clearly stated: in these two chapters, readers will not only be able to see how self-conscious revisions of myths by different authors and in different genres help to construct different and competing ideas, but will also see how the mythic feature of "variation" could be manipulated powerfully and taken advantage of in the process of myth-making and theory-construction concerning social order and social change.

A more interesting point arises here. As I have indicated above, the myth of autochthony itself is about social change, and as we have also seen, in different time periods and in different texts, autochthonous myths are always changing, so in this thesis, we are in essence not only looking at a set of myths concerning social change, but also the change of these myths of change. Now since there is already an explicit reflection on

change and order and an attempt to create a sense of stability in the stories of change, in the mechanism of mythic change and exchange, the very idea of change itself becomes crucial. If there is an attempt to achieve unchanging stability in the stories of change, how does the change of the stories itself effect the aim of unchangeableness? Does it help to strengthen the aim or weaken it? How can the change of story justify its own change and also reflect the issue of change? What exactly is the role of change in order establishment and what is the dynamic of the the interactions between change and stability? In these questions, we will constantly see that self-reflective games are being played in the changing stories about change. And in pursuing these questions, we will not only understand more sophisticatedly the significance of mythic change and exchange but also explore more Greek thought about social change and stability.

Amidst such dynamically changing stories about change, I will now propose my third motivation for looking at autochthony. As I have previously mentioned, myth changes throughout the history of Greek mythology, but the concept of myth also changes. The most important turning point in the idea of myth and *mythos*, as I have argued above, is the 5th century BCE when philosophers and historians made a challenge to traditional thinking. Now I would like to point out that, in the change of the stories about change, we will be able to see that the stories change as the notion of story itself changes. From early myths to tragedy and then to philosophy, we will see that there is a conscious reflection on the conceptualization of myth *per se*. As will be seen especially in chapter 4, Plato's strong criticism of mythic tradition and the idea of myth offers us a good example of such a change. And in this framework, Plato's new myth is of course not only a change of autochthony, but contains a more significant meaning – the myth itself shows the new understanding of the concept myth.

A brief conclusion of my main argument in the thesis will close this introduction: throughout the thesis, I will argue that myth is a field of change and exchange, where individual authors, various genres and different discourses respond to, argue with, or even compete against one another for a good explanation and understanding of the world. I will take autochthony as a case study where we will see, first, how autochthony in classical Athens tried to establish a new social order through mythic imagination in revising the social order as imagined in archaic times; and second, how this attempt was then received, reflected, criticized and revised again and again by different agents under their common concern about social order, social justice and the entire cosmic world. Myth

is never a closed realm of classics: it is an open place of continual and profound engagement, where active conversations were and are still happening in history.

Chapter 1
The Archaic Vision: Divine Order and the Human World

Ἡσίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὅμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι δοκέω μευ πρεσβυτέρους γενέσθαι καὶ ού πλέοσι: οὗτοι δὲ εἰσὶ οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἕλλησι καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες καὶ τιμάς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες καὶ εἴδεα αὐτῶν σημήναντες.

For I think Hesiod and Homer were alive four hundred years before my age and no more than that: they are those who composed genealogy of gods for Greeks and who gave gods their names, determined their honours and crafts, and shaped their forms.[1]

Herodotus 2. 53. 2

Let us begin with Hesiod and Homer in the archaic period, who are thought by Herodotus to be the founders of Greek myth and theology. Although it is questionable whether Herodotus' account of the history of Greek myth is complete or not – as, for example, the influence of Oriental religion on Greek world before Homer is certainly crucial for the development of Greek mythology –[2] one thing here is at least clear: for Herodotus, this Greek historian in the 5th century BCE, Greek mythic thinking could be traced all the way back to archaic thought which formed the very basic framework for the entire Greek mythology.

Of course, to use the term "myth" to address either the works of Hesiod or that of Homer can be relatively misleading, because firstly "myth" as a category has not been developed yet in the archaic period, as I have pointed out in the introduction; and secondly the thoughts of both Hesiod and Homer are more complicated than what could be described as "myth" owing to their rich narrative which not only contains stories of

[1] All the Greek and Latin texts in this thesis are quoted from Oxford Classical Texts and all translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[2] Substantial studies have been done on this topic. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the initial impact of the Eastern traditions has not been included in our discussion. I pay more attention to the essential nature of Greek religion *per se* that has been formed after the transmission. On study of Oriental origin for pre-Greek religion, see Guthrie (1935), Nilsson (1950), Dietrich (2004), Bremmer (2008).

gods and heroes as well as religious practice, but also some other contents which are straightforwardly related to human life that are not to be considered as myth in later period. But an investigation into Hesiod and Homer is still crucial for our reading, since as, has been indicated clearly by Herodotus, it was indeed from Hesiod and Homer that those central mythic *thoughts* about cosmos, world, society and human beings were put forward and it was also out of these thoughts that the later category of myth was eventually developed. To look at the thinking in this period, the ancestor of "myth", will thus help us to understand how Greek mythology developed and worked later in space and time.

Since the core subject of the thesis is social order and social change in genealogy, we will specifically focus on this issue in this chapter and will try to look at how order of human society is considered in early period of time. However, one cannot really look at the human world without looking at the divine world of gods because the world of myth, no matter whether it is in early period or in later time, is fundamentally a world of both gods and mankind, in which these two parties interrelate and interact with each other and together form the entire picture of Greek myth. Therefore, only by looking at the human world in relation to the divine world can we see how human society is framed systematically in Greek mythic thinking. The relationship between the divine world and the human world will thus be our main interest in this chapter and in the rest of the thesis.

So what is this relationship between the world of gods and the world of human beings? The answer to this question can be complex since, as we will see throughout the thesis, the relationship between the two worlds keeps changing. But no matter to what extent and in what way the relationship changes, I would like to argue that, standing from the perspective of human society, what remains the same is always the divine world being a kind of *reference* for the human world, which allows the latter to take the former either as a model or as a contrast for comparison.

There is a solid foundation for the divine world to be a reference for the human world. One important feature of Greek gods, which we will see again and again throughout the thesis, contributes to such a special relationship: that is, the divine world is very much like human society in many aspects despite the fundamental difference that one is mortal while another is immortal. The similarity between these two worlds lies in their common form of community. As we will see, unlike "God" in monotheism who is

usually transcendent and isolated, Greek gods, being in the system of polytheism,[3] are lively beings who live in a socialized group, just as human beings live. The gods speak to one another, take actions and, most importantly, form their physical society through procreation. They have parents, children, siblings, relatives, as well as friends, enemies. As a consequence, the gods bear names which endow them with individual personalities that distinguish one from another,[4] and they hold different honours which decisively set up their social status in a *system of relationships*.[5] With all these features, the divine world becomes reality parallel to experience of the human world;[6] a similar *society*, like that of the human community. With such a similarity, the human world is integrated into a parallel system of divine-human cosmos. What we see from the divine world could also be found – either similarly or differently – in the human world and this forms the very basis for our understanding of human society.

In such a context, our reading in this chapter will thus be divided into two parts: we will firstly look at the formation of the divine order in Greek mythic imagination, and then, through the divine world, we will pursue further the order of human world. I have chosen Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* as the main texts, along with some examples from Homer, because they are foundational and influential works in the archaic period, best known as "textbook to Greeks";[7] and they together serve as an excellent example for us to see a clear structure of the early mythic thinking concerning social construction.[8] Now in order to investigate social order in divine society, it is necessary

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[3] Murray (1955) 10.

[4] Burkert's comment is insightful: what makes Greek gods really special is that all gods have names. This means that, not only are the gods human-like but also they are practically in a physical world where they live and act as individuals, being solid subjects of mythic telling. Burkert (1985) 182-83: "The modern historian of religion may speak of 'archetypal figures of reality', but in the Greek, locution and ideation is structured in such a way that an individual personality appears that has its own plastic being."

[5] See work on the society of the gods by Vernant (1980).

[6] Admittedly, gods are different from mankind – they are immortal and they are superior to them, which prevents the latter from becoming the former – however, the solid form and social feature of the Greek gods otherwise suggest that the divine world and the human world correlated strongly with each other and their relation is more intricate than just two isolated worlds.

[7] Burkert (1985) 122.

[8] The epics of Homer and poems of *Homeric Hymns* etc. are, of course, also important texts to be investigated. But I focus on Hesiod in this chapter instead for the following reason. Although the works of Homer do concern social order and world order (see, for example, anthropological reading such as Redfield (1994)), he does not focus so much on the birth

for us to start with the beginning of its social formation, where society is about to form and social order is sought to be established.

I. "Order" as a Problem: Social Formation and the Pattern of Procreation

As we have mentioned above, in early Greek thought, very much like human society, the divine world is also a physical society of living beings where the formation of the divine world is developed through procreation. Indeed, even without linguistic analysis of the *corpus*, readers of the *Theogony* could feel how densely the words concerning begetting – τίκτω, γείνομαι, (ἐκ)γίγνομαι etc. – are compacted in the text: from the existence of the first god Chaos (116: γένετ) to all the later sexual procreations,[9] the emphatic use of the language of reproduction indicates explicitly that the pattern of social formation of the divine world takes so similar a form as that of the human world: it is through physical reproduction that the physical society is formed and it is also through the increasing population of living beings in society that the space of the entire world gets expanded.[10] In this pattern, interpersonal relationships of parent(s)-children and husband-wife are naturally produced by reproductive cycle and these relationships all together lay the most basic foundation for social construction in the divine world.

What, then, about social order within the divine community? If, as we have seen, the divine world is formed organically, is its social order formed along this process? This question might appear to be redundant at first glance because, during the process of social construction, there has already been a natural pattern of social relationships that frame every individual into an organized network: the mother-father-child structure.

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and genealogy of society. By comparison, the texts of Hesiod manifest a process of the *formation* and *birth* of an ordered world and it is this process that comprehensively and systematically reveals Greek thought on social order – from its origin, establishment, and maintenance to its failure – in relation to our understanding of autochthony. On the relation between Hesiod and Homer, see Hunter (2014) ch.2, especially p.43, Clay (2003) 178-9, Rosen (1997), West (1966) 40-48.

[9] It should be stressed that in terms of the central concern of this genesis myth, although both parthenogenesis and bisexual reproduction are permissible in the divine world, the former is much more crucial than the latter, as it is still the predominant method of reproduction in the myth and it brings out the significance of the reproductive history of gods.

[10] The Genesis of the cosmic world, i.e. cosmology, in Hesiod now naturally and necessarily becomes a theology and social thinking: the creation of the cosmos itself becomes the process of the formation of the divine world, during which not only the entire physical space is developed but also the pattern of social construction is formed.

This structure can itself be a kind of order: since the child is born from the parents, is it not natural that the former should be the follower of the latter? Should not origin itself be the authority of order-establishment prior to all the other things that come into being after it? If any other civilizations would see these issues in a positive light, for ancient Greeks, however, as we will see in the context of Hesiod and Homer, this assumption is problematized to make the direct link between social formation and social order not natural but questionable. Why should social formation necessarily lead to social order?

The problematic equalization between social formation and social order can be seen straightforwardly in Hesiod's narrative where it takes such a long time to finally reach a stable order in the divine world. From the first generation (Uranos), the origin of the cosmos,[11] to the second (Kronos) and the third (Zeus), social conflicts are always the dominant theme, and it is not until Zeus, three generations after the divine world is formed, that the revolution wars are finally stopped.[12] In this myth of genesis, as we can see clearly, social origin, social formation and social order are never synonymous substitutions, and social order could not come into being of its accord. What leads to such a difficult situation? Why, in the process of reproduction, cannot the order of a society just be set up organically? This is what the succession story really concerns and we will see that, in his narrative of genealogy, the poet has tried very hard to offer an aetiology for such an inconsistency.

The central problem of order establishment is shown explicitly in the first two generations where it is always the child who overthrows the father's rule. In the first two reproductive cycles, the fathers are obviously uncomfortable with the birth of their children (*Th*. 155: ἤχθοντο, the children are hated by Uranos; *Th*. 461: φρονέων, Kronos

[11] The unification of theology and cosmology in Greek religious and mythic thought forms the basic framework for Greeks' perception of the cosmos both as a material world and as a theological world. This unique feature imposed a significant impact on Greeks' cognitive understanding of the world that human beings are living in, which further shaped Greeks' whole idea of existence, i.e. being in the world. In this chapter I mainly focus on the theological side of this issue but our concern for cosmology will never be abandoned. As discussion develops, we will see that the most sophisticated reflection on social order by Plato in Chapter 4 precisely dwells on his concern for the relation between theology and cosmology.

[12] In the discussion of sovereign power, my interpretation is different from Vernant (1990) 63-65. He emphasis a division between Uranos and Kronos, suggesting that Uranos is not a ruler but Kronos has already been a sovereign king, which can be problematic. The supreme ruling has not been established yet in the age of Kronos because he is still challenged and is subverted.

is mindful about his children),[13] because there is always a threat that some terrible mighty offspring (*Th*. 155: δεινότατοι παίδων, 148: παῖδες μεγάλοι <τε> καὶ ὄβριμοι) will subvert the kingship of the father (*Th*. 462: ἵνα μή τις ἀγαυῶν Οὐρανιώνων ἄλλος ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἔχοι βασιληίδα τιμήν). In this narrative, we see that childbirth in the social formation is problematic. It seems that as long as a new power is produced, society cannot stay the same, and thus a change – be it good or bad – would necessarily happen. The natural structure of parent-child thus does not really give rise to a stable order but, on the contrary, with the newly born baby, the original social formation is interrupted and the established order is constantly threatened with change or even subversion.

Since the problem of order establishment has already been shown explicitly to be rooted in childbirth, cannot the gods just stop their procreation so that the origin of the threat could be prevented from coming into being? If this works, social order is likely to be maintained. However, unfortunately, this may only be wishful thinking. We are told by Hesiod that once the genesis starts, it is impossible to prevent procreation from happening. Although both the fathers were fully aware of the danger of having children, they just could not stop producing babies. Uranos is very productive with Gaia – they gave birth to 15 children (*Th*. 132-38, 147-49)! And Rhea and Kronos are also quite fertile – they had 5 children, one straight after another (*Th*. 453-58). In such a situation, the only remedy that the two fathers attempted to prevent the subversion from happening, is just to interrupt the childbirth *after* they have sex with their partners without ever thinking of a better stratagem: Uranos hid his children (*Th*. 157: πάντας ἀποκρύπτασκε) and Kronos swallowed his (*Th*. 459: κατέπινε). And we all know that, by doing so, neither of the two kings has succeeded in securing their rule. Uranos was castrated directly by Kronos (*Th*. 178-82) and Kronos was eventually subverted by Zeus (*Th.* 492-506).

There is surely a better stratagem for the kings to maintain their ruling order, which could eradicate the entire threat: that is, to stop their sexual union with the female partner, without which sexual reproduction would never happen at all. But it is surprising that neither of the two fathers seems to have ever thought of such a plan. The sex between the gods and goddesses is so natural that it just happens without any hesitation. And we

[13] On discussion of generational conflicts, see Clay (2003) 7, Reinhold (1970), Dodds (1951) 61, esp. n. 103. See also Nash (1978). The collection by Bertman (1976) shows the impact of this idea on Greek antiquity in later period of time. On Freud's idea of primordial patricide and generational conflicts based on sexual rivalry, see Wellish (1954) 9-10.

do see that once sex starts, the terrible events – sexual production, social change and revolution – all follow sequentially. So for the failure of the first two kings, the question is not really why they did not hide their children well nor why they were not able to defend their ruling order, but why they did not tackle the real problem – sex with the female.

Maybe it is not so much that the kings did not think of ceasing from sex with their partner; rather that, it is hard for them to withstand their sexual impulse. As we can see from the narrative of Hesiod, both of the gods have very strong carnal desire: the immoderate sex of Uranos made Gaia groan (*Th*. 159: στοναχίζετο Γαῖα) and Rhea is forced to be bedded repeatedly by Kronos (*Th*. 453: δμηθεῖσα). This desire appears to be so strong that it cannot be resisted readily. Desire overwhelmed the entire body so that even though the kings hated their potential mighty sons, they were not even able to stop having them.

Eros, erotic desire, is the origin of the issue. This is the real problem of order establishment that Hesiod shows throughout his narrative. But can this power be eliminated from the world at all? It seems, again, impossible. Since Eros is shown to be the very power that drives social formation as well as the entire world evolution, it is at any rate irremovable. As we can see from the very beginning of the *Theogony*, Eros plays an exceptionally crucial role: as early as the birth of the first group of gods, Eros, the only abstract force that motivates male and female longing for sex and then procreation, is said to be born (*Th*. 120).[14] This is obviously a special arrangement due to his necessary

[14] In addition, it is very unusual that Eros appears twice in the *Theogony*, first as a primordial god then as a son of Aphrodite, which further highlights the special status of this god. Although these two Eros could be seen in different myths and traditions, it is not common that both Eros are included into one single work. It seems that Hesiod intentionally combines the two traditions in order to remind his audience of the uniqueness of this god. Vernant [(1990) 463-69] follows Rudhardt (1986)'s research about two Eros and suggests that the old Eros is different from the young Eros. He argues that the old Eros does not embody erotic desire since, in the case of Gaia and Uranos, Eros does not work to drive one to the other because Gaia and Uranos are one unity rather than two. Vernant's argument, I believe, is wrong. First of all, there is no indication in the text that the Eros who appears at the first generation and who accompanies Aphrodite have different functions. Secondly, although Gaia is said to be covered by Uranos, Uranos is not *within* Gaia but is out of her. They two are combined as a unity but not born to be one. Uranos has genitals which function as a connection between the two. Without the genitals, i.e. after castration, the two are immediately separated. Thirdly, right after the appearance of Eros in the first generation, the union between two subjects is described as φιλότητι μιγεῖσα (125) and Gaia also suffers from Uranos's lust, which is exactly the

driving force of sexual procreation, without which the entire cosmic evolution would not have happened.[15] But what is paradoxical is that soon after the power of Eros became effective, the society formed by it became unstable. The more sexual the male and female feel, the more they beget children; the more society develops, the more social order changes. And under such an influence of the erotic desire, both Uranos and Kronos get into trouble with their offspring.

Now we see that in both cases of Uranos and Kronos, sexuality and procreation ("birth from the two") become a double-edged sword: society is developed but it is exactly because of such a development that social order is continuously being interrupted by the threat of new-comers – the children, potential force of change. A great paradox between the pattern and the aim of social formation is shown here in the underlying assumption of the succession story: while the aim is to establish a stable order of society, the pattern of sexual procreation in social formation, on the contrary, leads to endless and unavoidable social change. The more desire triggers sexual union, the more male and female beget children, the more changes are potentially prompted, the greater inconsistency between social formation and social order. This is why both Uranos and Kronos find it so hard to maintain their rule while enjoying the bed with their partners.[16]

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cause for castration and revolution. Therefore, I argue that Eros, that is sexual desire, is the basis of sexual reproduction from the very beginning of the world. West [(1966) 195]'s discussion also supports my argument. He suggests that the position of Eros here in the very first generation of created powers strongly shows a quasi-demiurgic function, as in 'Orpheus': "It is true that Eros is not mentioned again in the *Theogony*, except in a quite different connexion in 201, but he is nevertheless present throughout as the force of generation and reproduction: he is not named as such, it is only because the formulae describing sexual union refers to φιλότης and Ἀφροδίτη instead." See also a psychological explanation on Eros in Lamberton (1988) 70.

[15] It is true that there are also some births through parthenogenesis (birth from one), but Eros is obviously the major force of cosmic origin and social formation because since Eros comes into being, almost all the major gods are born through sexual procreation (birth from two). Terms such as φιλότης, εὐνάω and μίγνυμι scatters everywhere. See for example: *Th*. 177, 206, 238, 306, 333, 375, 380, 383, 404, 405, 625, 634, 651, 822.

[16] Sussman (1978) proposes that the process of creation is equal to the interactions of sexual beings. Although there are sexual conflicts during procreation, it "enhances and expands the creative potential of sexuality by ensuring that the end product of sexual interaction, new being, will be able to act upon the world." I can hardly agree with her opinion that sexual conflicts promote establishment of order. Instead, as we see in the text, sexual conflicts impede the ordering process and only when the sexual conflict is suppressed is the order established.

What is worse is that, being trapped in such a procreation pattern of "birth from the two", neither Uranos nor Kronos has managed to take control of the situation. Not only did they fail to control their own erotic desire, they also did not control well the other two parties in this system: the mothers and the children. And we have seen that in both cases, it was these very mothers and the children who finally subverted the kings' rule, although both of they are weaker than the kings. We may even put it more precisely: in both cases, it was always the weak mother who helps the weak child to subvert the strong father's rule.

Let us now have a look at the procreation pattern which leads to the fathers' failure of control. We have argued that since neither Uranos nor Kronos has managed to restrain their own desire, the result is that both of them beget children. Then, in order to prevent further threat of social change, the two fathers turn their eyes to the product itself. Once the children were born, Uranos attempted to hide them (*Th*. 157-58: πάντας ἀποκρύπτασκε, καὶ ἐς φάος οὐκ ἀνίεσκε, Γαίης ἐν κευθμῶνι), and Kronos swallowed them (*Th*. 459: καὶ τοὺς μὲν κατέπινε μέγας Κρόνος). In terms of emergency birth control, both of the gods seem initially to have taken quite effective actions. By concealing his children in the Earth, Uranos sent the begotten ones back to the mother's womb, pretending that the birth had never happened. Through gulping newly-born children into his own belly, Kronos takes even better control of his offspring by supervising them on his own. But perhaps, to our surprise, both Uranos and Kronos still failed to prevent their tragedies from happening. This makes us wonder: where precisely have these attempts gone wrong?

Unfortunately, the two fathers made all of their efforts in the wrong direction. Neither Uranos nor Kronos has been fully aware that in the entire process of childbirth, the primary issue lies with the mother and not with the children – we know that it was the two mothers who made the cunning plans and helped their children to challenge their fathers' rule, and it was also from the mothers' womb that the children came out to confront their fathers (*Th*. 178-182; 482-84). Merely getting rid of the offspring will not solve the fundamental problem.

As is shown in the story, the underestimation of the power of the female became the most fatal mistake that Uranos and Kronos would make. When Gaia and Rhea no longer withstood the violence of the male, they finally revolted against their partners and took feminine actions. In the subversion of Uranos, Gaia contrived and conducted the

castration trick. She hid (*Th.* 174. κρύψασα) Kronos in her womb and told (*Th.* 175. ὑπεθήκατο) her son how to revenge his father by cutting off his genitals. And in the next generation, the female goddess Rhea, again, took over the role of Gaia and played another trick in collusion with the latter:[17] she followed Gaia's advice and concealed a stone in the belly of Kronos to replace Zeus, so that the youngest son who later went against the father was saved (*Th*. 477-500, esp. 494).[18]

Here Gaia's womb is presented as the main battlefield of the female. The womb, like pudenda, has a strong sexual connotation in the context of reproduction.[19] Its function is to breed and produce children. It is thus interesting to see that this feminine organ was purposely presented as a prominent opponent against the male's genitals in Uranos' myth – which were mercilessly castrated by the son following his emergence from the mother's very womb – as if the combat between two sexes was represented by the battle between the male and female sexual organs.[20] Of course, this is more of a symbolic representation of sexuality, but with Hesiod's vivid and emphatic presentation of the womb and the genitals, our attention should still be paid more to the rich implication inherent in them.

Biologically speaking, the male's genitals are the couple's only instrument to connect two sexes. His genitals enable him to dominate sexual union. But on the other hand, this organ is easily cut off since it is protruding.[21] During intercourse the genitals

[17] This time, Gaia performs the role of a receiver who also functions as a place to hide. Hide (κρύπτω) and hole (ἄντρον), see line 482-83: κρύψεν δέ ἐ χερσὶ λαβοῦσα/ ἄντρῳ ἐν ἡλιβάτῳ (She hid him in a cave). The strategy that Rhea adopted is very similar to Gaia's as well, which plays the game of concealment. See line 485: Rhea wrapped a huge stone.

[18] Caldwell (1987) 57: the "clever advice of Gaia" may be what she told Rhea, or what she may now tell Zeus. Apollodoros (1.2.1) says that Metis assisted Zeus by giving Kronos an emetic drug.

[19] The image of Baubo, the old woman who jested with Demeter in the Eleusinian mysteries is the best example of such connotation. Her feminine face, womb and sexual organ are formed into one, which directly presents the identical cultural connotation of femininity, womb and female genitals. On Baubo's sexual indication, see Georgopoulos, Vagenakis and Pierris (2003). Also there are massive discussions in Greek medical theory about womb as a sexual organ, especially in Galen, Hippocrates and Aristotle. see King (2002) 25-39, Laqueur (1990).

[20] The parallel between womb/male genitals and female/male can be seen clearly in later time. Galen, for example, claims that the womb is a part distinctive of the female while the genitals are peculiar to the male. Cf. Aristotle *GA* 1. 2. 716a19-b1, *HA* 1.13. 483a25. On the connection of womb and genitals, see Laqueur (1990) 31-33.

[21] Cf. Aristotle *HA* 1.14. 493b3-4.

as the connection instrument cannot be hidden. Therefore, the genitals become a revealed target, to which a direct attack could be made readily when the male is having sex with the female, as in the case of Uranos (*Th*. 176-182). The womb, as well as pudenda, by contrast, is not an active participant in the process of intercourse. The womb just receives whatever is given by the male. In this sense, the female is less empowered to take an active control of the sexual activity, as in the case of both Gaia and Rhea. But on the other hand, lacking a protruding part, the female sex organs cannot be so easily chopped off. This means that although the female plays a passive role, she lacks this key male vulnerability, which in turn provides a solid backing for the female's rebellion against the male.

Besides the advantage of defence, the womb has yet another crucial feature, which decisively enables itself to *win* the gender combat in a more active way: as an independent space, which is segregated from the external world, the womb is able to keep things in darkness and thus becomes naturally a breeding ground for secrets, tricks and clandestine plots, which can be entirely out of the male's knowledge and control.[22] This feature has been repeatedly and emphatically shown in both stories of Uranos and Kronos where concealment was a significant stratagem for revolutionary actions (*Th*. 174-75; 482-84). A reversal happens in the relationship between womb/female and genitals/male here: the original violent control of the male over the female has been lost and the male is otherwise put in an unfavourable position, where he is incapable of pinning down the actions of his opponent at all. This is precisely the case for Uranos and Kronos, who did not even know the cunning plan of the mother and son until they were attacked out of the blue (think about how sudden and quick the action of Kronos's castration is! *Th*. 178-82).

The one who dominates is now dominated. This is of course a trick – and a very cunning trick, which helps the weaker to overthrow the stronger. From the perspective of the male's rule, such a trick must be painful and is a great threat to social order. But in the pattern of sexual reproduction, owing to the nature of the mother's womb, this trick has been found to be very effective. The mother could take not only advantage of the concealment provided by her womb, but also of the natural attachment of the children to

[22] *Th.* 117-19: Γαῖ' [...] οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου/ Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῷ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης. It suggests that the wide-pathed earth naturally has the ability and space (the dim Tartaros) to hold secrets. Tartaros seems to be the lowest part of Earth.

her body. With the child born from *her* womb, the mother in effect gets more control of her children than the father. At this moment, she is independent of her partner, entirely out of his control. Therefore, as long as sexual reproduction happens, as long as the womb functions, the female is able to conduct tricks independently – an Other who is unseen and uncontrolled by the male. In this sense, the father's action to stop procreation, stop growth, and stop change is very hard to be realized, and potential social disorder can never be removed. How cannot the male hate the female?

In the pattern of sexual procreation, we see the real difficulty in establishing social order: it is the female. If we trace the entire cause and effect back to its root, from the perspective of the male ruler – if it is the growth of society, the birth of children, the action of sexual procreation, and the allure of erotic desire that unavoidably lead to social instability, social change and even social disorder, then it is in essence the existence of the female and the need for sexual union *per se* that make all of these things happen. In other words, it is the procreation pattern of social formation itself that fundamentally contravenes its aim. This leads to a very tragic world view: nature *per se* does not bring order to the world. If social order is to be established, it is necessarily a construction – be it artificial or cultural.

II. Order Constructed: from Dualistic Opposition to Monistic Order

It is stated by Hesiod that, in the third generation, Zeus was born as Uranos and Kronos before him to paradoxically contribute to both social formation and social disorder. Like his predecessors, Zeus subverted his father's regime, and right after he came to power he confronted the same threat of being subverted by his own child (*Th*. 894-98). But we all know from the following myth that Zeus did not let the generational conflict happen again; instead, he managed to establish a stable rule. As we can see, even though Zeus also had sex with goddesses and produced children, his rule was never decisively overthrown like his predecessors. On the contrary, he gained acknowledgment from all the gods on the Olympus to be the sovereign king of divine society. In this way, Zeus established a stable order and brought a *new beginning* to the world.[23]

[23] In the narrative of Hesiod, Zeus' rule marks a distinct turning point in the world evolution and explicitly heralds the beginning of a new era in which world order is established and will be maintained. In the prelude, three different "beginnings" are presented by Muses: beginning of cosmos (Chaos, *Th*. 116ff), beginning of reproduction

If, as we have argued above, the establishment of social order cannot be a natural process, how did Zeus succeed in his attempt and become a prototype of the order-establishment in Greek mythic thinking? It is now necessary for us to have a look at Zeus' story and investigate how he managed to resolve the paradoxical contrast between the pattern of sexual reproduction and the aim for social order. In this section, we will see that in his establishment of ruling order Zeus specifically dealt with the issue of reproduction and tried very hard to resolve the problem caused by it. Since, as we have argued above, erotic desire as an original natural impulse for social formation was at any rate irresistible, we will see that Zeus did not attempt to get rid of it but reserve a place for this power – and he himself still had sex out of desire. But what is different is that Zeus makes a great effort to deal with the matters *after* the sexual union, and focuses especially on the female – this absolute Other to the male – who is the key to the procreation pattern. We will see that it is exactly his different treatment of the female in sexual relationships that directly leads to a different result from the previous two generations.

Here is what Zeus did to his sexual partner Metis: right before Metis was going to deliver her child, Zeus swallowed the whole pregnant mother into his belly.[24] At this moment, Athena was born directly from his head (*Th.* 886-900). The child who was predicted to be a subverter of the father now becomes a follower and defender of him.[25] As we can see here, what makes a big difference between Zeus and his predecessors is that, unlike the previous rulers who still kept the sexual procreation working normally, Zeus has attempted to break this dual-sexed procreation pattern forcedly away from sex.

(Gaia and Uranos, *Th*. 36-115), and beginning of order (Zeus, *Th*. 11-21). However, it is interesting to note that although the first two beginnings are chronologically prior to the beginning of Zeus, the latter is put at the beginning of the poem, which seems to be indicating that this beginning is the real beginning of world history. As Clay (2003) 56 argued: "The catalogue…appears neither strictly speaking chronological nor does it follow a clearly articulated genealogical scheme. Moreover, it does not take its start from the first gods…but begins instead from Zeus and the Olympians, the present generation of gods." See also Caldwell (1987) note on line 11-21. For the discussion of "beginnings", see Clay (2003) 49-53, Arthur (1983). "Beginning": 1, 36; 24, 116; 34, 115; 108, 113; 105. On the cosmological analysis of the origin of cosmos, see Clay (1992) 139-40, Bussanich (1983) 215-18.

[24] My reading of Zeus' swallowing Metis focuses on the sexual conflict between male and female. For the discussion about the intelligence of Metis, see discussion of Vernant (1990). See also Vernant and Detienne (1978) 107-26, Zeitlin (1996) 72, Clay (2003) 28-29, Arthur (1982)77, Nelson and Grene (1998) 99-101, Sihvola (1989) 20.

[25] On rights over reproduction, see Vernant (1988) 170-71.

By absorbing the mother into his body after he satisfies his carnal desire, the father gets a whole control of the entire situation.

Now the procreation pattern has been decisively changed: it transforms from "birth from the two" to "birth from the one". The father takes over the mother's work, her life, and further her existence. The mother loses her intimate attachment to the baby, loses the ability of the womb to function as a hidden place for cunning plans, and also her independency as an absolute other that is uncontrollable by the father. The dualistic opposition is in this way removed. Through a forced construction, Zeus violently established a monistic order that was long desired by Uranos and Kronos. Without the block of the womb, those secrets, uncertainties, concealments and unknown challenges "in the womb" are completely eliminated.[26] Gone as well is the threat caused by sexual union. Zeus becomes the only controller of the female's procreation. This is a complete conquest of the male over the female – a thorough *deprival of the ontological essence* of the latter.

As a symbolic trophy of Zeus, Athena the daughter immediately confirms such a triumph. She is born to be a virgin – and is destined to be a virgin: she is supposed to be not erotically alluring, cannot be an object of desire, cannot have sex, nor can she give birth to children. All of these points effectively eradicate the potential threat to Zeus from the existing womb as well as the threat from a greater son. Being deprived of the chance of having sex and children, this female, the daughter and the defender of Zeus' rule is completely under the control of her father and she becomes the best manifestation of Zeus' new order.[27]

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[26] Most scholars take Zeus' swallowing Metis as a symbolic event that marks the success of Zeus in combining strength (Zeus) and intelligence (Metis) into one. This is true that Zeus is both mighty and intelligent. But to think that Zeus is not intelligent enough before he swallows Metis can be too much, since Zeus is born to be smart and does not lack μῆτις at all, as is explicitly shown in Zeus' confrontation with Prometheus. For mainstream interpretation of Metis, see Detienne and Vernant (1991), Bergren (1983), Dolmage (2009) 198-99. But Detienne and Vernant is right to point out that in this event it is *Metis* who is controlled and she is the figure of subversive power.

[27] The case of Athena in autochthony in classical Athens, however, is more intricate. As we will see in the next chapter, although she is a virgin, she is also an object of desire. But what remains the same in the autochthonous story is that even though Athena arouses Hephaestus' desire, she still refuses to have sex with the male god and insists on keeping her virginity. This is a stronger narrative concerning Athena's virginity and it is exactly this point that makes Athena admirable in autochthony. See my discussion in chapter 2 section 1.

Besides the deprival of the female's dominance of procreation, the conquering of the mother Metis (instead of other goddess) is even more significant. As the name of Metis suggests, this goddess is the representation of cunning tricks, thus symbolic of the potential for secrets offered by the womb, and thereby representative of power for change, especially for the less powerful to conquer the more powerful. This is a feature that is inherent in all the female characters in the succession story and also the decisive factor behind the revolutions. To destroy Metis means not only to destroy the female, but more precisely the womb, and the source of concealment that is out of male control. The victory of Zeus in this sexual relationship thus indicates explicitly that the weaker are no longer able to use *metis* to overthrow the stronger. When Zeus dominates the entire procreation he won his final triumph. After this point, procreation was no longer a threat: Zeus has armed himself with certainty and stability.

Of course, such a triumph does not mean that in the world of Zeus there is no conflict, sexual relationships or erotic desire anymore; but rather that sexual reproduction will no longer substantially subvert Zeus' rule. It is noticeable that after Metis, Zeus still desired to have sex with goddesses (*Th*. 915: ἐράσσατο, 920: φιλότητι μιγεῖσα) – he has six wives! – but none of them, including all their children, challenged Zeus' rule; on the contrary, they helped to reaffirm Zeus' sovereign power while retaining the subordinate status (*Th*. 901-23). [28] And once the desire leads to a potential danger, as is the case of Thetis in the *Iliad*, whose power is so great that to love her may well lead to a fatal destruction, Zeus immediately eliminates her power by forcing her to marry a mortal man not only so that a greater son than him would never be born (*Il*. 1. 393-412; cf. *Il*. 18. 429-34), but also so that the son she bears could only die vulnerably and helplessly despite her own power.[29]

[28] Under Zeus' powerful rule, the females confirm the king's monistic order. It is notable that Zeus first married Themis, the goddess of justice and divine order. This is a significant moment when the female shows her submission to the male's rule and order. See Detienne and Vernant (1991). Sleeping with such a fecund god, Themis never says no, nor has she any intention of going against Zeus like Gaia; instead, this goddess delivered five children consecutively, Hours/ Order/ Justice/ Peace/ Fate, all of whom are positive figures incarnating stability, regularity and continuity, which not only help to strengthen the rule of their father king but also justify his order as universally good. Naddaf (1988) xx- xviii.

[29] Slatkin (1995) convincingly argued that in the *Iliad* the power of Thetis is the core cause of her marriage to Peleus. And later mythic versions of the marriage of Thetis, in responding to their predecessor, even more explicitly indicate what is just alluded to in

In terms of the effectiveness of *metis*, the situation under Zeus is also similar. When Prometheus attempted to challenge Zeus by a trick of meat, he did not really succeed in subverting Zeus' rule but was punished by the mighty and intelligent Zeus harshly (*Th*. 510-24; *WD*. 42-59). And in Homer, when Hera tried to erotically seduce Zeus to bed with the help of Aphrodite – a trick to help the Greeks (*Il*. 14. 153-353) – her goals were limited in scope, since she never thought of overthrowing Zeus' kingship but rather of deceiving him temporarily. Right after Zeus awoke from the bed, she was scourged by the king (*Il*. 15. 5-34) – and she shuddered (*Il*. 15. 34: ῥίγησεν).[30]

As we can see, the real point of Zeus' order is that even in a normal sexual society, even if there are desire, change, uncertainty and conflict, he could still maintain the most fundamental order and keep his rule stable. In this sense, we know that Zeus' swallowing of Metis and the birth of Athena are more symbolically significant, showing the crucial moment of the establishment of his monistic ruling pattern. In such an event, Zeus manifests to the world his great power and aptitude for destroying completely the female, through which he is no longer controlled by the sexual procreation pattern but in reverse takes control of it. Now the swallowing of Metis has far-reaching consequences. Not only "with the closing of the cycle of succession, no one of his sons can offer a serious threat

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the early tradition. Pindar's *Isthmian* 8, for example, has made it clear that Thetis is married to Peleus precisely because of a prophecy that she, like Metis, is destined to have a son who would be greater than his father. Therefore, despite his love for Thetis, Zeus still lets the goddess marry a mortal instead and see her son, i.e. Achilles, die in war. But this reason, as is argued by Slatkin, has already been hinted in both *Iliad* and *Theogony*.

[30] There are more myths about Hera going against Zeus. But as we will see, even in these myths Hera had never transgressed the fundamental boundary of Zeus' order in Greek mythic cycle. For example, in Hesiod, Hera once attempted to revenge Zeus for his giving birth to Athena alone. As a counteraction, Hera delivered a child by herself, who was named Hephaestus. However, this son turned out to be a lame god (*Th*. 945: ἀμφιγύεις; cf. *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*: 315-17). He is congenitally deficient and when this feature is compared with the power and wisdom of Athena, child of Zeus, the inferior status of mother was explicitly shown. A more radical version of Hera challenging Zeus could be seen in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 305-374, where Hera being angry at the birth of Athena solely from Zeus, prayed to deliver a son who shall be stronger than Zeus. There a monster called Typhaon was born, who brought disaster to human world. However, even with this curse, Hera's challenge failed in the end when Apollo, son of Zeus, came to the land and conquered her. As we see, all stories between Zeus and Hera end in the subordination of Hera to the male king without exception. As we see, all these sexual relationships between Zeus the goddesses repeatedly demonstrate the firm monistic order that has been established by Zeus' thorough suppression of the female. On Zeus' rule over Hera, see, for example, Synodinou (1987), Whitman and Scodel (1981).

to Zeus' supremacy,"[31] but more importantly, being permanently exposed to the danger of destruction, the female (and other male) gods no longer dare to contrive a rebellion against the king. This is why, although Zeus was still obsessed with sexual desire like his predecessors, none of his partners ever overthrew his authority.

Shall we say that the birth of Athena by Zeus is a form of parthenogenesis?[32] It could hardly be said so. I would like to suggest that it is still a sexual reproduction but a transformed one. The nature of this reproduction differs greatly from the simple parthenogenesis, which only means to be born from one parent without any engagement of sexual partnership. Since the birth of Athena is the result firstly of sex between Zeus and Metis, and then of the former swallowing the latter, the two sexes here are in effect still involved in the procreation process, and the combination of the two bodies into one is an explicit sign of the dual-sexed reproduction. But what makes this dual-sexed relationship really special is that, as we have discussed above, it changes the dualistic procreation pattern of "birth from the *two*" to a monistic pattern of "birth from the *one*":[33] it is this transformation that removes the potential disorder that would be triggered by traditional sexual intercourse. It is this new pattern of sexual reproduction that successfully resolves the crux of the problem and thereby truly establishes a valid social order in the divine world. Therefore, the famous claim by Athena in later time that she was born solely from her father can bear much more meaning than the literal indication:[34] she is solely born from her father after her father tamed her mother and thus she, as a virgin daughter, obeys her father's rule.

Zeus' suppression of the female has proved to work very well and the divine order seems to have been securely established. But this is not the entire stratagem of the king. As readers might notice, there are at least two female figures who seem to be exceptional to the suppression mode: they are not *suppressed* by Zeus violently; instead, they are exceptionally *honoured* by him and occupy a high status in the divine community. The

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[31] Clay (2003) 29.
[32] On reading Zeus-Metis procreation as parthenogenesis, see Jacobs (2009), Mondi (1984), Thomas (1998).
[33] Another question is: "Is the same born from the same or from the other?" These two questions come from Lévi-Strauss (1958) 239, from whom a further question could be asked: "How can men who are truly men and women who are truly women be born from a man and woman?" "How can the same give birth to the different?" On the structuralist analysis, see Vernant (1988) 153-71, (1991). Cf. Loraux (1984) 75-94, (2000) 8.
[34] Aes. *Eum*. 736-40.

two goddesses are Gaia and Hekate. Their case is obviously different from that of other goddesses. If Zeus' order is already maintained well by his violent suppression of the female, why should he need to show high respect to these two goddesses? In the following discussions, I will argue that this is a cunning ruling scheme, which ultimately guarantees Zeus' sovereign order. From these two goddess we can see another crucial aspect of Zeus' order: to encourage the female to be submissive to the male's order *voluntarily*.

We will begin our investigation with Gaia. This goddess is undoubtedly a leading figure in the entire succession myth, who took part in all of the three generational revolutions.[35] During Zeus' reign, Gaia is special at a very critical moment. When Zeus is going to re-divide τιμή (*Th*. 885) amongst the Olympian gods, Gaia served as a consultant of the king who devised a scheme for the honour distribution. The division of τιμή, for Zeus, is of course a historically significant event: it will not only shape the social formation of the divine world but also set up a universal standard for value judgement in the new world order. To be a consultant of Zeus at this point means that it is Gaia who regulates of Zeus' order – what should be praised, valued, and encouraged and what should not be. But what is the point of getting Gaia involved in this whole process? For this question, I will argue that it is because Gaia, in the era of Zeus, represents an ideal feminine type under his rule, and with this image she herself becomes an excellent standard for other goddesses to follow.

Let us now look at the image of Gaia in more detail. What is most interesting about this goddess is that she experienced a dramatic change from the pre-Zeus era (the first two generations) to the post-Zeus era (the third generation) and, as we will see, it is this transformation that is most crucial for her and Zeus. As mentioned above, in the pre-Zeus era, Gaia performed the role of a challenger to male rule, who not only contrived subversive plots but also carried them out. But in the post-Zeus era, Gaia surprisingly converted her standpoint. She was no longer opposed to the male but conversely joined them, becoming a supporter and then an advisor of Zeus (*Th*. 886-91).[36] This dramatic

[35] The first time: 173-187, Gaia suffered violence from Uranos and conceived a plan to hide Kronos; the second time: 468-480, Gaia conceived a plan to deceive Kronos and hide Zeus; the third time: 888-891, Gaia offered advice to Zeus on swallowing Metis.
[36] Gaia makes the plan accompanied by her victim Uranos. Perhaps following the failed attempt to prevent revolution, Uranos has learned his lesson and he has now made a new alliance with his offender. See Vernant (1991) 62.

contrast before and after the rise of Zeus shows the uniqueness of Gaia, which presents a change of the goddess from a feminine figure to an anti-feminine figure.[37]

We still remember that in the first two generations, Gaia's womb played a crucial role to help the female to win the battle. In the third generation, however, it did not work as we might have expected. Gaia did not offer her belly to conceal anyone, although she still had the power to do so. Instead, the goddess restrained herself from this trick and chose not to help the female party. This is in essence a significant concession to the male. Furthermore, by suggesting that Zeus swallow Metis, Gaia not only gave up her female right to dominate the womb but also in turn helped the male to destroy the female completely. In this way, these two actions together powerfully form a dualistic *self-repression* by the female: firstly Gaia repressed herself (by depriving herself of her power to conceal), and then she repressed Metis (by depriving Metis of her reproductive ability). The threat of feminine power is removed by the female herself and now the female subordinates herself to the male *willingly*. This is a remarkable transference of power from the female to the male. In this sense, Gaia shows to other goddesses what is right and good behaviour under the rule of Zeus. She certainly deserves to be the distributor of divine honour.

Then how about Hekate, the other distinctive goddess who specifically receives the king's honour? The Hesiodic Hekate is described very differently from the one familiar from later centuries. In the *Theogony*, there is an extensive encomium which admires her special kind of τιμή, superimposed upon the formal scheme,[38] which is quite unusual.[39] The hymn to Hekate (*Th.* 404-52) is not only remarkably long but also is the only hymn in the *Theogony* dedicated to a single goddess. Unlike the other goddesses, she

[37] Vernant [(1980) 465-66] suggests that Gaia is not limited to pure femininity. On the role of Gaia, see Zeitlin (1996) 79, Clay (2003) 17-18, Arthur (1982) 78, DuBois (1992) 102.

[38] West (1966), 277.

[39] Hesiod's hymn to Hekate (404-52) is a section of extreme interest for scholars. A good deal of attention has been given to this hymn over the past century and more with students of Hesiod offering a variety of explanations for the unusual honour of Hekate. Many scholars such as Wilamowitz [(1931) 172] and Kirk [(1962) 80] interpret Hekate on more philosophical and theological grounds. While others link Hekate's special status to Hesiod's beliefs or family history. See for example, Mazon [(1928) 21-24], Van Groningen [(1958) 269-70], Wade-Gery [1949 (85-87)] and West [(1966) 82-83]. However, when trying to link Hekate's status to Hesiod's personal beliefs, one should be more careful, since Solmsen [(1949) 51-52] rightly asserts that we know little about these. We should interpret Hekate in the mythic context.

actually receives from Zeus a share in the distribution of τιμή (*Th*. 412-15: she was allotted a share of earth, barren sea and starry sky, and was foremost honoured by the immortal gods), and is praised in a wholly positive light. The noble status that Hekate obtains seems to be even more distinct than that of Gaia. If Gaia is respected because of her invaluable contribution to the revolution of Zeus, what is the uniqueness of Hekate? Why does Zeus give such an extensive honour to this female figure, who is also from the pre-Zeus world, one generation older than the sovereign king?

The special role of Hekate is firstly shown in her function as a mediator.[40] She is a representative of the old order projected into the new. The position of the hymn to the goddess in the poem deserves readers' attention. This hymn is sung immediately after Zeus' successful revolution and it would readily remind us of the tension between the old and new generations. Having just revolted against his own father, the threat of a new cycle of subversion and reversal must be the central concern of Zeus. It is at this sensitive moment when Hekate appears. By bridging the old cosmos to the new and confirming Zeus' division of honour,[41] this goddess releases the tension.

But the uniqueness of Hekate is more than that. What is more special is her identity. According to Hesiod, Hekate is praised twice as the only child of Asteria (*Th.* 426, 448). In reading these lines, Arthur insightfully points out a very crucial feature of Hekate here: virginity. And it is the emphasis on this identity that really explains the uniqueness of this goddess: "This is unquestionably linked to her special characterization as μουνογενὴς ἑκ μητρός. On the one hand, the matrilineal tracing of her descent and her lack of a male context isolate her in the patriarchal order. On the other hand, although she is like an *epiklêros*, she does not marry Zeus, but becomes more like one of his *daughters*…and remains a *virgin* [my italic]."[42]

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[40] On Hekate as a mediator, see Clay (2003) 130-40, Priou (2014) 238-9, Arthur (1982) 68-69, Lamberton (1988) 85-90, Boedeker (1983). On other interpretations, see Walcot (1958) who puts Hekate in the framework of Hesiod's hymn to goddesses; Marquardt (1981) who discusses Hekate's power influenced by her genealogy and deals with the traditional view that Hekate functions as mediation, and Boedeker (1983) who suggests that Hetake displays a transfunctional feature.

[41] Arthur (1982) 68, Boedeker (1983) 82.

[42] Arthur (1982) 69. He also suggests that Zeus' over-valuation of this goddess should be understood as a compensation for her undervaluation in the patriarchal social order. Cf. Griffith (1983) 51-55, Boedeker (1983) 89-90. See also Segal (1974) 293, Lefkowitz (1985) 209-10.

Virginity again becomes the most prominent issue in the order of Zeus. It is of course important to the king, as we have already seen from the case of Athena, because to maintain the status of a virgin means to be permanently deprived of her sexuality and her feminine power. Hekate here becomes the second Athena. As a virgin daughter, the image of Hekate indicates no threat to the male: in a world of desire and reproduction, she lies outside this system, and thus everything about her is predictable and controllable. In this way, she further ensures the stability and certainty of Zeus' rule. This is why Hekate is so important to Zeus.

As we have seen, the goddess achieves her privileged status at the cost of her *completeness* as a female being: she is a childless protector of the young, a virgin and nurse, but never a mother.[43] As a mediator, Hekate effectively confirms the newly established order of Zeus, thereby transforming the old world into the new. On the other hand, by not sexually uniting with this potentially dangerous goddess but giving her over-valued honour, Zeus gains more benefits: he takes a chance to make virginity an admirable virtue to encourage the other female goddess to follow her example voluntarily.[44] With the establishment of Zeus' order, the female is tamed, even feels honoured, and is submissive to the male.

With both myths of Metis and Gaia/Hekate, the picture of the divine order under the rule of Zeus is now comprehensively shown. What Zeus established is an order of dynamic equilibrium. On the one hand, if there should be a *threat* from a feminine power, the male would violently *suppress* the female to the greatest extent; on the other hand, however, if the female goddesses self-consciously restrict their own power and *yield* to the monistic order of patriarchy willingly, then they gain the respect of the male and are even *honoured* as proper members of society.

But it should never be forgotten that all of these principles could only work on the basis of the absolute supreme power of Zeus, who *has the ability* to swallow the female, i.e. to destroy its existence decisively and to make the female permanently exposed to a

[43] Clay [(2003) 133] argues that Zeus appears to divert the great powers of the goddess away from the gods and towards the world of men. "As protector of the young, Hecate is later assimilated to Artemis, likewise a virgin goddess." Cf. Griffith [(1983) 54], who ignores the potential danger in Hecate's feminine character. Arthur [(1982) 69-70] and Zeitlin [(1996) 77] who emphasizes the role of Hecate as nurturer rather than mother. See also Zeitlin (1996) 66 with note 22, Marquardt (1981) 244 with note 2, and Boedeker (1983) 83-84 with note 21-22.
[44] Clay (2003) 131.

constant threat of extinction. Male confidence depends on the ever-lasting uncertainty of the female. The king knows that even though the female still lives in the sexual world, in fear of destruction they would find that the best way to survive is to refrain from using their *metis* and their allure.

III. What about the Human World?: A Tragic Version without Resolution

We have discussed Greek mythic thinking concerning the formation and order of the divine world. Now let us turn to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which shows a panoramic view of the human world.[45] As is argued above, since the divine world is imagined to be comparable with human society, we will see in this section that such a comparative vision becomes even more obvious. The central concern about the human world remains the same: how could – or could not – social order be established in human society?

I wrote "could not" as, right in the opening lines of the *Works and Days*, we have been told that the fundamental feature of the contemporary human society is disorder.

[45] Expansive discussions on the differences between the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* have been made both with regard to their structure and their content. Many scholars have recognized these differences and have generally adopted diachronic models to analyse them, thereby emphasizing the evolution of Hesiod's poetry from the more 'traditional' *Theogony* to the more 'individualistic' *Works and Days* [Clay (2003) 5], and proposing temporal progress which implies the "correction" of the *Works and Days* to the *Theogony* in the later composition [Most (1993) 76]. However, the differences between the two poems are not necessarily indicators of an evolutionary development. The *Works and Days* does indeed make reference to the *Theogony* and therefore indicates that it is composed after the *Theogony* [Clay (2003) 6, Hunter (2014), 114]. I am in line with Clay's position that the relation between the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* is nevertheless more synchronic than diachronic: the two poems are generically divergent, but fundamentally complementary and interdependent. "When the *Works and Days* alludes to the *Theogony*, it emphasizes both the differences and interconnections between the two poems and simultaneously brings to the surface their divergent but complementary perspectives that must be integrated into a larger whole." [Clay (2003) 6-7]. In the respect to the relationship between human, gods and the world, there are indeed corresponding themes in the two poems. The *Theogony* explores the becoming of the theological and cosmological world governed by Zeus; the *Works and Days* then demonstrates the condition of human beings within such a world. For the debate on the relationship between the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* see Clay (2003) 5, 129-149, (2005) 26. Cf. Most (1993) 7. However, in my later reading of Hesiod, I will show that the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* share the same central concern, that is the order of the world, but as the former narrates the divine world while the latter the human world, their narratives of the same myth are different in many details in order to adjust to the poetic focus.

Two *Erides* (*WD*. 11-25) are the first goddesses that the poet invokes,[46] and the first event brought to our eyes is a dispute between two brothers.[47] In this description, the human world for the moment seems to be more like the divine world in the pre-Zeus era, which is an anti-type of Zeus' age. Such a narrative shows clearly that the social order of the human world is far from being established. Here a crucial question arises: why cannot a stable social order be formed in the human world? Concerning this question, Hesiod's thought immediately turns again to the core issue of sexuality and gender order. The myth of Pandora (*WD*. 42-105) is where Hesiod begins his poem, and he explains to his brother and the audience that it is precisely because of the creation of Pandora that the human world is trapped in the condition of disorder.[48]

According to Hesiod, Pandora is created as the revenge of Zeus against Prometheus. The deliberate combination of the story of a god (Prometheus) and a human being (Pandora) indicates strongly that the disorder in the human world is closely related

[46] Regardless of the distinct qualities of the two *Erides*, one good and one bad, I emphasize the nature of the Eris as a whole. Both the two *Erides* engender competition and comparison. The two sides of *Erides* are more consistent with the human condition, where the good is mixed with the bad. For the double nature of *Erides*, see Rosenmeyer (1957), Nagler (1992), and Gagarin (1990).

[47] It seems to be too mundane to be worthy of noting. However, putting such an event in the beginning of the poem as the reason for its very composition shows the essential nature of human society. Conflicts in the world of human beings not only occur on major issues, political struggles or heroic battles; they also occur in daily life. Strife reaches every corner of a society, and touches every single moment of an individual's life. No one is able to escape from it – even with the appeal to Zeus, like Hesiod. Therefore, conflict is an issue that troubles the entire world of human beings.

[48] A comparison between the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* shows the central role that Pandora plays in the formation of human society. Although the consecutive stories of Prometheus and Pandora appear in both *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, the structure, narrative and details in the two versions vary in many different ways. In the *Works and Days*, which concerns the world of human beings, the narrative of Prometheus is greatly compressed. There are only a few lines on Prometheus' fire-stealing as a background for the punishment which Zeus imposes upon human beings. By contrast, the story of Pandora in this text is greatly expanded. Pandora's birth is not like the birth of the first woman in the *Theogony*, which seems to be merely sub-fable in the framework of divine ordering; this woman in the *Works and Days* is presented as a major cause of the current form of human society. She is not only a *trick* that Zeus plays in revenge for Prometheus' crime: she is the *evil* itself that will bring endless toil to human beings, and thereby separate men from gods. Fraser (2011) is right to argue that Pandora is of more importance to the Iron Age *Works and Days* than to the divine *Theogony*: she is described in greater detail and becomes more of a prominent figure in her own right. See also Clay (2003) 100.

to the world of gods.[49] During Zeus' rise to power, Prometheus challenged Zeus twice, deceiving him to help human beings (*WD*. 47-52). Zeus was naturally wrathful about the deception, presumably owing to the potential threat posed to rulers when matters are concealed and kept secret from them, as we have seen repeatedly in the succession story. Therefore, in order to punish Prometheus and mankind, Zeus sent an "evil thing" (*WD*. 57: κακὸν) to men in return for their cheating. At this moment, Pandora was created.[50] The question whether Zeus was really cheated or not is beyond the scope of current discussion,[51] but the entire story of Prometheus and Pandora at least indicates clearly that the creation of women was part of Zeus' larger plan to secure his ruling order,[52] and the formation of human society is the direct result of divine actions.[53]

The narrative emphasis on Pandora's story invites a question here: for what reason does Zeus use Pandora alone as a weapon to punish the great challenge of Prometheus and mankind? What is special about Pandora? It is imperative for us to look at the image of this woman. Hesiod portrays her in great detail, focusing firstly on her alluring beauty and then on her shameless mind and deceitful character (*WD*. 61-69):

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[49] West has noticed the uniqueness of Hesiod's combination of the three myths: "What we have in Hesiod, then is a combination of three myths, all probably traditional, which could have been told separately." West (1966) 307. See also Wehrli (1956) 415-18, Philips (1973).

[50] It is important to note that the Hesiodic narrative of Pandora formed a traditional way to look at women and their relationship with men. This tradition was not modified in later time from Semonides to Euripides: women are always regarded as a threat to the unity of a masculine society. As Loraux points out, more than that, "the reference to Hesiod allows us to raise a perennial question in the Greek ideology of citizenships: that is, the exclusion of women, the paradoxical 'half' of the Greek polis." Loraux (1993) 75. Cf. Vidal-Naquet (1986) 205-23. Therefore, the myth of Pandora is an excellent case study for looking at the formation of the human world and Greek mythic imagination regarding society and citizen identity.

[51] On whether the supreme god was deceived, see Clay (2003) 60, 109. Scholars such as Solmsen (1949) 49 suspect Hesiod's justification of the omniscience of Zeus. Cf. West (1966), who insists that Zeus was completely cheated.

[52] The action of 'the woman' is most naturally understood as the result of Zeus' plan. *Th*.99. Cf. 57-8. See Hunter (2014) 247-9.

[53] This is prominently shown in the Prometheus episode where human beings are victims of the tricks of gods that are played at their expense. See Clay (1984) 9 and Kerényi (1997) 88-89. Another example occurs in the proem where the narrative is "preoccupied exclusively with ontological verities." Arthur (1983) 97. Both points depict human beings as only a part of the whole structure of the cosmos, in which order is established through succession combats.

Ἥφαιστον δ᾽ ἐκέλευσε περικλυτὸν ὅττι τάχιστα
γαῖαν ὕδει φύρειν, ἐν δ᾽ ἀνθρώπου θέμεν αὐδὴν
καὶ σθένος, ἀθανάτῃς δὲ θεῇς εἰς ὦπα ἐίσκειν,
παρθενικῆς καλὸν εἶδος ἐπήρατον: αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνην
ἔργα διδασκῆσαι, πολυδαίδαλον ἰστὸν ὑφαίνειν:
καὶ χάριν ἀμφιχέαι κεφαλῇ χρυσέην Ἀφροδίτην
καὶ πόθον ἀργαλέον καὶ γυιοβόρους μελεδώνας:
ἐν δὲ θέμεν κύνεόν τε νόον καὶ ἐπίκλοπον ἦθος
Ἑρμείην ἤνωγε, διάκτορον ἀργεϊφόντην.[54]

[Zeus] commanded the famous Hephaestus to
mix earth with water quickly, and put in the voice
and strength of mankind, and to fashion a beautiful and charming shape
of a maiden whose face is like an immortal goddess.
Then he commanded Athena
to teach her work, to weave web skilfully;
And then he commanded golden Aphrodite to shed pleasure around her head
as well as troublesome desire and sorrow that gnaws the limb.
Then he ordered Hermes, the messenger and slayer of Argus
to put in her a shameless mind and a cunning character.

The "immortal-like" (*WD*. 63: θεῇς εἰς ὦπα ἐίσκειν) is probably the highest praise that a mortal woman could receive, and Pandora is evidently such an aesthetically pleasing woman. This woman's beauty also serves to indicate her sexual desirability. She is endowed with desire (*WD*. 67: πόθον) by Aphrodite, the goddess of erotic love, and is full of pleasure (*WD*. 66: χάριν) – aspects which can lead to sexual pleasure. The more she gains sexual appearance and elegant decorations (*WD*. 69-82), the more Pandora becomes an object of desire itself: Athena girded and clothed her; Divine Graces and Persuasion put golden necklaces upon her; Hours crowned her with spring flowers.[55]

[54] Greek Texts of *Works and Days* are quoted from Most (2008), unless otherwise indicated.

[55] Some scholars like DuBois [(1992) 103-5] and Zeitlin [(1996) 59] find the beautiful-looking Pandora to be surprisingly "anti-eroticist". They argue that, when Pandora is sent to men, there is no description about any carnal activity between woman and man,

This is the real trick that Zeus played. He knows from experience how desire can destroy order, i.e. how desire for the female will lead to sexual union, powerful sons, and thus revolution. In sending the archetypal desirable female to the human world, Zeus sends the most disastrous threat of disorder to human society. Once men are trapped in the sexual procreation pattern, their aim for social order would necessarily be interrupted. And on top of the sexual allure, we see that Zeus also endowed Pandora, this "evil gift" (*WD*. 57: δώσω κακόν), with a deceitful mind and persuasive wiles (*WD*. 73). Now with such endowments, Pandora can be sent down to trick mankind, and thereby the established rule of the stronger would be overthrown by the weaker through concealment, secret and uncertainty.[56]

This is so much like the situation of the first two generations in the divine world. From the entire story of Pandora, we could see a similar narrative pattern to the succession myth in the *Theogony*. In particular, this mortal woman is very much like the immortal goddess Gaia in the pre-Zeus era. As we can see, like Gaia who is both attractive

though she is decorated as more than seductive and attractive. "Woman's sexual and reproduction roles remain still more discreetly obscured." And a further criticism is made by both Boyarin and Zeitlin, who hold the opinion that Hesiod's writing on sexual austerity is a "suppression of woman's fertility", which means "ignoring the value of her experience in childbirth, the *ponoi* of her suffering and travail". Indeed, the absent narrative of Pandora's erotic seduction is problematic, but two differences still need to be emphasized: (1) Pandora is a special figure who is different from common women later in the human world; (2) erotic seduction is distinguished from heterosexual reproduction. Indeed, after Pandora is sent to human beings, there is no sign of sexual seduction in the narrative of the poem. However, before Pandora comes to the human world, she is accepted by Epimetheus, a god. The lengthy and detailed description of the goddess-like appearance of Pandora (immediately prior to the acceptance of Epimetheus!) alludes to the erotic reason for Epimetheus' acceptance. After Pandora opens the jar, Zeus' plan has been achieved and thus Pandora's mission has been accomplished. This is why, from then on, Pandora is absent from the poem and her sexual activity is never mentioned again. She comes to life before the birth of all the ordinary women and acts as a *bridge* (and also a *gap*) between gods and men/women. In comparison, for women in common life, there is no description about their seductive feature, but reproduction is emphasized.

[56] Vernant [(1988) 199] observes Pandora differently: "Through the charm of her outward appearance, in which she resembles the immortal goddess, Pandora reflects the brilliance of the divine. Through the bitchiness of her inner spirit and temperament she sinks as low as the bestial. Through the marriage that she represents, and through the articulated word and the strength that Zeus commands her to be endowed with, she is truly human." Although I am with Vernant that Pandora displays both charm and wickedness, they can hardly be differentiated the one to the divine and the other to the beast, since as we have seen in the succession myth, divine goddesses also possess both attributes. On double nature of Pandora, see also Pucci (1977) 89-94.

and cruel in sexual relationships, Pandora is also a mixture of beauty and evil. And also like Gaia, who brought violent destruction to the male gods and thereby made them remorseful, Pandora sent misfortune to the human world and became men's great regret. It is very likely that Hesiod had Gaia in mind when he was composing Pandora: Pandora is even made of Gaia the earth (*WD*. 61: γαῖαν ὔδει φύρειν) and is precisely a mortal Γαῖα.

Sending Pandora to the human world is thus in effect sending a Gaia-like female creature to men. This is the most horrible punishment for human beings that Zeus could devise. During the successive revolutions, Zeus and his predecessors had learned thoroughly and painfully the power of the female. After generational fighting with the female, Zeus finally got rid of social disorder in the world of gods. But now he summons a Gaia back and sends her to men as Pandora, doubtlessly projecting the previous divine pains into the human world. With the presence of Pandora, human beings now have no choice but to be yoked by the bondage of desire and sexuality, and thereby be constantly troubled with those potential threats from the female as well as – most importantly – the dualistic opposition of the two sexes.

What is worse, unlike immortals who are able to take destructive action to eradicate the existence of the female and thus sexual procreation, mortal men, who could now only rely on sexual union to beget offspring, dare not get rid of the existence of the female at all. To remove the sexual conflict and establish a monistic order like Zeus becomes an impossible mission for mankind. Once they are trapped by the sexual relationship, they can never escape from those unsolvable conflicts, combats and wars, and as a result, the human world falls into a circle of revolution, and *deteriorates* from an original ordered world that is similar to the world of Zeus to a chaotic society that embodies features of the pre-Zeus world.[57] As we see now, the creation of Pandora is

[57] Sending Pandora is the key point for the final establishment of the cosmic order. Pandora is not simply a personal punishment of Zeus but a deed that is approved by the entire divine world, including both male and female gods. It is this event that permanently ruptures the divine world and the human world. Comparing to the first woman in the *Theogony* who is decorated only by Athena, Pandora in the *Works and Days* receives all kinds of decorations from a number of gods. They name this woman Pandora, since she receives gifts from every god (*WD*. 81-82). This is an interesting revision. The name πανδώρα indicates the involvement of all gods: this gift is given by the party of gods to the party of human beings. Unlike the story in the *Theogony*, where the irreconcilable conflict happens *within* the party of gods, i.e. between Prometheus and Zeus (Athena, as the daughter and confederate of Zeus, helps to make the trick so that Zeus is able to defeat Prometheus), the creation of Pandora in the *Works and Days* marks a division *between*

fundamentally significant for both worlds: it fixes the tragic condition of the human world and thereby distinguishes the human world from the divine world.[58] In this way, the human world is subsumed within Zeus' paradigm.

In Homer's narrative, a similar stratagem of Zeus can also be seen. As we have mentioned above, one big threat to Zeus' rule is the powerful Thetis who, like the pre-Zeus Gaia and Metis, was predicted to have a child greater than his father. Because of such a threat, Zeus, despite his love for Thetis, forced the goddess to marry the mortal Peleus, making her the mother of a mortal child, so that she could not bear a mighty son who might overthrow him. But with the picture of the human world, we may soon realize that the punishment of Thetis is not the entire goal of Zeus' action. In introducing the powerful and alluring Thetis to mankind, the trouble that Zeus faces is also symbolically introduced to the human world, like the case of Pandora. The specific emphasis on the short-lived fate of Achilles, the son of Thetis (*Il*.1.352-54), dramatizes the tragic condition of human beings, where the mortality of mankind makes sexual reproduction a necessity to human life no matter how dangerous the consequence is. And even with such a danger, human beings can still never equal divine beings, since the only way to gain the status of an immortal is to obtain ever-lasting honour; but the only way to win that honour is to die, like Achilles, who is destined to be killed no matter how god-like and mighty he is. As we see here, Zeus' plan is not just to secure his rule, but to secure the entire cosmic order, his divine order.

Along with Pandora, also introduced to human society is what I term the "dark womb", the battle field in the pre-Zeus divine world. Not only does Pandora herself, as a woman and an object of desire, naturally bear a womb, but she also is given a jar, a container, which echoes strongly all the negative features of the womb in pregnancy. We are told that this jar contains all evils that will later be released on the human world. Its presentation not only once more highlights the presence of women in the world but also serves to objectify women as this specific sexual organ, i.e. the womb.

Then what is significant about this "womb"? As has been observed by many scholars, the most prominent feature of Pandora's jar is certainly its preservation of *elpis*.

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gods and mortals. Therefore, the main conflict changes from god-god to gods-men in the post-Zeus era. On the name Pandora, see Clay (2003) 124, 160, Zeitlin (1996) 60. See also O'Brien (1983) 36, Fraser (2011).

[58] Zeitlin (1996) 62 and 71.

When Pandora opened the great lid of the jar and scattered diseases and hardships, *elpis* alone (*WD*. 96: μούνη δ' αὐτόθι Ἐλπὶς), remained under the jar's rim and did not fly out. The retention of *elpis* is of course one crucial part of Zeus' plan. Therefore, by examining the role of the jar and the *elpis* within it, we are able to see how it symbolizes the second "womb" of Pandora.

Much ink has been spilled on this mysterious *elpis*, especially on its unique quality. As *elpis* is obviously distinguished from other evils scattering outside, one of the central debates is whether *elpis* is good or bad and how we should deal with the relation between *elpis* and other evils.[59] Many traditional readings, with the translation of "hope", take *elpis* as the only good thing that Zeus sent to human beings, because without hope, life would have too much suffering to be tolerated.[60] A few scholars, on the other hand, propose a different translation. "Expectation/supposition" is suggested in the etymological study of Verdenius,[61] which I believe is more plausible.[62] Verdenius argues that *elpis* is the worst evil among all the evils: it is the *expectation* of evils. The continual expectation of evils might make life difficult if not intolerable. Verdenius believes that Zeus, at the last moment, offered some mercy and kept *elpis* – the worst evil – within the jar, so that evils only come to the world unexpectedly.[63] Although I do not concur with Verdenius's

[59] Whether *elpis* is to be understood as something good or something evil was debated fiercely both in antiquity and in modern times. For the modern discussion on the debate in antiquity, see Hunter's detailed discussion on Babrius, Theognis, the Proclan scholia and Proclus. Hunter (2014) 247-9. See also Leinieks (1984), Zeitlin (1996) 53-86, Clay (2003) 103, 124-5, Clay (2009) 77 n. 22 list further bibliography. Verdenius (1971) classifies the two sides of the debate as (1) to keep *elpis* for men; (2) to keep *elpis* from men. For more detailed debate on *elpis as good hope*, see, for example, Beall (1989), who believes that the Hesiodic jar contained only good things, and that, once those spirits have departed, humanity is left with no protection. On the other hand, West (1978b) argues that Pandora let evils out into the world, but that *elpis*, hope, is nevertheless a good spirit. Then again, some Scholars take *elpis* as a bad spirit and and believe that man is responsible for the evil consequences of his *blind hope*. See for example, Adams (1932) 196 and Onians (1951) 404. Some other scholars, such as Vernant [(1988) 200] and Zeitlin [(1996) 64], take *elpis* as both good and bad.

[60] Vernant (1988) 200. See also the translation of Most (2006).

[61] ἔλπομαι is not "to hope" but "to suppose". Verdenius (1971) 230: "ἔλπις in the sense of 'hope' is only a specialization of 'supposition'. … supposition and expectation may refer to something good or something bad."

[62] Van Noorden (2014) 54 holds a similar opinion as Verdenius, translating *elpis* as 'anticipation'.

[63] Verdenius (1971) believes that Zeus only decided to retain *elpis* within the jar after he had already given it to Pandora. But there are no strong grounds for believing this. I argue instead that Zeus planned to keep *elpis* within the jar all along. Zeus never expressed any

optimistic interpretation of Zeus' kind heart, his insight that *elpis* might function as a kind of "expectation", for me, fits in well the mythic logic of Hesiod.

Keeping "expectation" in the jar is not just a matter of good or bad, rather it is the creation of a state of *uncertainty*. Without expectation, human beings are unable to see either fortune or misfortune. The situation becomes unpredictable and uncertain. Without foresight for the future, human beings are at the mercy of the unexpected. Moreover, since this is all part of Zeus' plan for revenge, surely allowing *elpis* to be retained in the jar cannot have been the result of goodwill for humanity. Instead, this is the most vicious idea of Zeus and the most crucial part of his plan: it fixes the human world to the Pre-Zeus world where uncertainty, instability and disorder shape the formation of society. The creation of woman was the central cause for such suffering; but it was only through *elpis* that the tragic uncertainty was extended to the entire human world. The nature of human life is thus made a struggle to survive against uncertainty. It is this unpredictability that Zeus really wants to bring to men: to make them tormented by anxiety, fear and panic, just like his predecessors.

With this reading of the *elpis*, now we can see more clearly how Pandora's jar and woman's womb parallel one another in mythic thought. It has been argued by scholars that the jar could be compared to a rapacious belly (*gastêr*).[64] However, in the larger context of Zeus' plan, what in essence links the jar and the womb is the feature of *concealment*.[65] By concealing *elpis* in the jar, Zeus renders humanity in a state of uncertainty and thus prevents men from holding secure knowledge of the future. Similarly, as we have seen, in the succession story, all three generations are troubled by female tricks, secrecy and concealment, closely associated with the nature of the womb/belly. Both the womb and the jar are thus not only symbolic representations of the danger of women but, more importantly, are indicative of the essential reason for the

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regret in the poem that *elpis* was not released. And we are given no indication that he ever altered his original plan. In addition, this is the third time that the poem uses the phrase "by the plan of Zeus" (*WD*. 99: βουλῇσι Διὸς). In other words, the plan of Zeus went well all the way.

[64] This is strongly argued by Vernant in his discussion of Pandora and *bios*: "The belly of the woman, which man must plough if he wishes to have children, [and hence support in old age] is like the belly of the earth, which man must plough if he wishes to have wheat, since Zeus has hidden the bios in it." Vernant (1988) 180. See also Zeitlin (1996) 59, Maurizio (2001), Arthur (1983) 97-116.

[65] In this sense, the greediness of the belly has more to do with its gulping things into its dark space, which would cause much horror.

instability of sexual society. In fact, the female in and of herself does not constitute an automatic threat to male rule; rather, it is the *uncertainty* caused by the female ability to conceal truth that constantly troubles both the pre-Zeus world of the gods and the post-Pandora world of human beings.

The state of being concealed in these stories means to be hidden from the sight. The exterior of the jar/womb prevents an observer from seeing what is conceived within. Without expectation in life, human beings remain short-sighted, and lack omniscience and the ability to foretell danger. The blindness of human beings again contrasts them with the great king Zeus. Zeus is far-seeing and he masters darkness. When we remember that Zeus hates secret tricks both in the succession myth and Prometheus's story,[66] we understand that Zeus is fundamentally against uncontrollable darkness and concealment. Relatedly his weapons are thunder and lightning – the latter of which by definition serves to reveal what is hidden in darkness. This is immediately in contrast to Gaia's essential attribute of keeping things hidden. To reveal and to *know all* is the most prominent quality of Zeus in Hesiod: it helps him to maintain the stability of his rule. When Zeus conducts his final war with Typhoeus (*Th.* 820-885), it is his very weapons, thunder and lighting, that win eternal glory for him. His *lightning*-bolt (στεροπήν τε καὶ αἰθαλόεντα κεραυνόν) struck and *burned* (ἔπρεσε) the monsters of Typhoeus; *fire* (φλὸξ) poured from the thunderstruck Typhoeus in the *dark* (ἀιδνῇς) rugged glens of the mountain; the earth *burned* (καίετο) widely (*Th.* 854-868). Zeus' fire destroyed the original order of the cosmos; the lightning brought into light the new order over which Zeus was ruling. And, more importantly, after defeating the monsters, Zeus locked them underneath the earth and, by doing so, he takes control of the power of concealment for his own benefit – he now masters the darkness that he hates. By this logic, Zeus' swallowing Metis indicates the final victory of light over darkness and knowledge over concealment, and thus serves as the final stage of his revolution. After this, although the divine world is still a normal sexual society where desire and reproduction still exist, Zeus could otherwise maintain his ruling order since what is hiding in the womb of the female can no longer be hidden from him anymore: Zeus knows all that is in *his* belly; he uncovers the last concealment.

[66] On the division of the ox meat, see Vernant (1988) 198, (1983b), Clay (2003) 94, Priou (2014) 241. In the narrative, "concealment" appears many times and is presented as a crucial element. Καλύπτω "to cover": 539, 541, cf. 9, 127, 745, 756, 798. On hiding and concealment, see Vernant (1983) 42, Nelson and Grene (1998) 64 and n. 23. See also Sihvola (1989) 40-41, Walcot (1961b) 18-19.

The contrasts between light and darkness, concealment and revealing, blindness and far-seeing explain why fire is so important for human beings. The fire in the ash trees, is for mortal men, the first and foremost light source for illuminating darkness.[67] The poet describes twice this feature of fire, πυρὸς τηλέσκοπον (far-seen light) (*Th*. 566, 569), which grants human the ability to see and reveal what is hidden. Human beings originally had fire; this was then hidden by Zeus in response to Prometheus trick with the ox meat.[68] But when Prometheus played his second trick (namely, to return fire to humanity), Zeus sent Pandora to men, instead of simply confiscating fire again. Pandora, i.e. woman, is of course more powerful than fire: she is so erotically alluring that, even though men are totally aware of the risk, they cannot help but approach her desirously, embrace her erotically, and make love with her lustfully. With women, an uncontrollable Other, men trap themselves with endless uncertainties, conflicts and turbulence. To bring woman's womb to the world: this is, for Zeus, the best "gift" to human beings. It separates short-sighted men from the all-seeing Zeus. The father of gods and human beings thus sets up an unchallenged order for his bright world.

Can mortals at least achieve a certain degree of order? Hesiod tells his audience that there is indeed a possibility, if they work hard according to the calendar and follow

[67] On the different benefits provided to humanity by the fire, see Vernant (1988) 198: the technical fire; Vernant (1983): civilized fire; Clay (2003) 102, 119: Zeus and fire; Lamberton (1988) 100. The image of fire in the *Theogony* is first and foremost related to light, as is shown in its relation to far-seeing Zeus' lightning power. In the *Works and Days*, fire becomes the basis and medium for eating and sacrifice. Sacrificial fire in the *Works and Days* also seems related to humanity's short-sighted vision: humans need to sacrifice to the gods to better know the future. On the relation between fire and eating/sacrifice, See Detienne and Vernant (1989) chapter 2; also see Segal (1974), Loraux (2000) 5.

[68] There is some ambiguity as to whether mortals possessed fire originally. Lamberton [(1988) 100] argues that fire was originally held by human beings and Prometheus simply stole it back for them. I take his argument to support my discussion.

dikē.[69] Both the time-schedule for farming and *dikē* (i.e. in law) are traces of order,[70] but note this: they are certainly not natural products but rather social construct. That is, they need to be constructed with additional efforts – time needs to be observed and *dikē* needs to be set up by men. Not to our surprise, during this process of self-ordering, the sexual relationships continue to be considered important. Within the sphere of ordinary life, in a city of *dikē*, the poet suggests that "women should bear children who look like their parents…they thrive on all the good things life has to offer." (*WD*. 236) Men live with women in a form of family and they together give birth to the next generation and so on *ad infinitum*. This seems to be an attempt to construct a new structure of sexual relationships, in the form of family, to achieve a temporary harmony between men and women. Following the narrative logic of Hesiod, this proposal is likely to indicate a metaphorical imitation of Zeus' monistic order – through uniting two sexes into one family, procreation is no longer a problem but a boon: in a family governed by *dikē*, humans can have generational continuity and inheritance. However, even so, Hesiod is well aware of the potential vulnerability presented by such an arrangement, and is thus overall pessimistic. There are always good wives *and* bad ones. To achieve social order is thus, regretfully, only a matter of luck (*WD*. 702-05):

> οὐ μὲν γάρ τι γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ ληίζετ᾽ ἄμεινον
> τῆς ἀγαθῆς, τῆς δ᾽ αὖτε κακῆς οὐ ῥίγιον ἄλλο,
> δειπνολόχης: ἥτ᾽ ἄνδρα καὶ ἴφθιμόν περ ἐόντα

[69] The meaning of *dikē* in the *Works and Days* is a vexed subject of long-standing debate over whether *dikē* should be understood as "justice" related to Zeus or has the narrower meaning of "settlement" in law. Against the instinctive and more orthodox feeling of other scholars suggests that *dikē* in *Works and Days* does not literally mean "justice" but always has a more limited and objective idea of "settlement". Solmsen (1949) 86-100, Vernant (1983) 19-46, Pearson (1962) 81-83, Lloyd-Jones (1971) 35-36. Gagarin insightfully argues that *dikē* should be understood to mean "settlement", in that it indicates a settlement of conflicts and a proper establishment of self-order in the human world. Gagarin (1973) 81-94

[70] Zeus' sexual union with Themis (hour) and the birth of the seasons is important for the order of the world in the *Theogony*. Nelson and Grene [(1998) 109] observes: "Within Hesiod's sense of the divine, Zeus himself has no particular sphere. Nor can he, since it is he who is responsible for the order and permanence of the whole. This is why the seasons are so important. The seasons of the *Theogony* are Zeus' first children…." In so doing, "Within the world of nature, they are the order of Zeus…Hesiod's particular association of Zeus with the seasons illuminates Hesiod's ability to see simultaneously a multiplicity of gods, and a single divinity, Zeus, whose will inform the whole."

εὖει ἄτερ δαλοῖο καὶ ὠμῷ γήραϊ δῶκεν.

For a man wins nothing better than
a good wife, and nothing more horrible than a bad wife,
a parasitic one: and although the man is strong,
she burns him without fire, and grants him a raw old age.

IV. Conclusion

This chapter investigated the archaic mythic imagination concerning social order. As the divine world is presented as a comparable reference for the human world, the social order of human society could be understood through the divine world. This mythic framework provides Greeks with a divine vision for understanding the position of themselves as human beings as well as the nature of their own society.

For Hesiod, social order cannot be formed naturally, but is a problematic concept from its very beginning. The main difficulty in establishing social order lies in the nature of sexual society itself where the *dualistic opposition* in the male-female relationship leads to endless conflicts between the two sexes and, further, between generations. In such a society, a strong contrast exists between the pattern of sexual reproduction motivated by sexual desire which, necessarily, leads to social change, and the aim of establishing social order which, necessarily, requires stability. The more sexual union is desired, the more children are produced, the greater the chances of challenge to the older generation by the younger, the greater the likelihood of social revolution and disorder. Without a proper treatment of sexuality, social order can hardly be achieved.

In the mythic account, the first two kings in the divine world failed to maintain their ruling order precisely because they did not deal properly with sexual relationships. By contrast, Zeus succeeded in establishing and maintaining social order because he found a way to resolve sexual conflicts. The stable social order set up by Zeus is based upon his victory over the female: through suppressing and subordinating the female to the male, the nature of sexual relationships in the divine world shifted successfully from a *dualistic opposition* to a *monistic unity*, thereby securing a stable social order for the divine community.

In comparison, the world of human beings is imagined to be naturally disordered, experiencing a *reversal* of the process applied to the divine world. It deteriorated from an

ordered world to a chaotic society. In the mythic narrative, this depressing condition of human society was also caused by the issue of sexuality. With the introduction of women and desire, along with the resultant dualistic opposition and sexual conflict, the rule of the male is undermined and becomes subject to uncontrollable and unpredictable change. For mortals who could only produce offspring through dual-sexed reproduction, women could never be removed from the equation or conquered, as was possible for Zeus. Such a structural contrast not only leads to a dark, miserable, and disordered situation for human society, but also permanently prevents mankind from becoming divinity.

This tragic view of the human world and its contrast with the divine world in the archaic mythology is fundamental to the production of later myth. As we will see, in the classical period, the issues in these ancient myths continue to be of primary concern as a starting point for deviation, whether more or less optimistic. In the next chapters, we shall turn to a specific series of myths in classical Athens, those that deal with autochthony. Through this case study, we will see how richly, intricately and sophisticatedly the issue of social order is imagined, understood, and investigated in later mythic and intellectual world.

Chapter 2
Autochthony as Social Myths: Imitating the Divine Order

In the last chapter, we have seen how the archaic Greeks understood the issue of social order in a mythic framework and how the human world was thought to be by nature a disordered society. In this chapter, we turn to the classical period and look specifically at the set of stories surrounding those autochthonous kings of Athens, which I call "myths of autochthony". We will investigate how classical Athens, through narrating this new series of myths, expressed contrasting ideas against those of the archaic period and attempted to understand human society in a different light.

This kind of change forms a conversation between the two periods of Greek culture in space and time. With the mutation of mythic narrative, classical Athens not only developed novel ideas about the world but also, by working in the same framework, responded to the thought of its predecessors. As we will see, in the classical period, Greeks, especially Athenians, no longer followed traditional thinking about disordered human society but began to change this tragic idea and establish a desirable social order for the human world.

This change is unusual and radical, especially seen from the archaic perspective. To imagine a stable order established in human society is in effect to deny the most fundamental nature of the human world as a disordered community. We could even say that in the general framework of Greek myth – the human world *versus* the divine world – such an affirmation of the social order of the former shows an attempt to assimilate the former to the latter. Yet, as we will see, although such an attempt can well be at a risk of crossing the boundary between humanity and divinity, Athens in its classical period was so confident that this radical idea was expressed in its vigorous thought. At least, if we do not claim that at its acme Athens was to some extent coveting divinity *per se*, by taking the archaic divine world as a reference (or even an alibi), this city did make an effort to establish a more positive relationship between mankind and divine beings so that the human world could approach the state of the divine world as closely as possible.

Historically speaking, this dramatic transformation is very likely related to the rise of Athens to its height of power and splendour in the 5th century BCE. As the greatest *polis* in the panhellenic world, Athens' optimism about the outside world as well as its own social condition may have given its worldview a positive or even a bold cast of mind. In

this context, Athenian autochthony as the "charter myth" of the city appears to be a strong construction of social discourse which not only alters previous thought in the realm of mythic imagination but also creates a new type of world. In this world, human society no longer suffers from disordered conflicts but could achieve a stable order like that of the divine world.

As I have mentioned above, the crux of the transformation from archaic to classical thought lies in the re-understanding of the relation between divine beings and human beings. In our reading of Athenian autochthony, we will see that this change is vividly demonstrated. Not only does the birth of the autochthonous kings follow the principle of divine birth, but also the entire society of these "god-blessed children"[1] imitates closely the order of the divine world. In both ways, Athenian autochthony granted human society a justification from divine order and, more importantly, presented a golden dream that makes this human society a divine-like community in the era of Zeus. Now, in this classical myth, the divine world imagined in the archaic period still serves as a reference for the human world but it becomes a parallel to human society rather than a reversal of it.

Following such an intimation of change, this chapter is divided into two sections. Each section, with a different angle, contributes to our interpretation of autochthony as a commonly shared social discourse in the city of Athens. In the first section, I will discuss the *literary narrative* of the three main stories about autochthonous kings. I will argue that, in these myths, there is a similar narrative pattern and mythic logic, which show a repertoire of concerns about human order in relation to divine order. In the second section, I will turn to the *material world* to explore the comprehensive implications in artworks and architecture. I will mainly look at the construction of the Acropolis, the best-known and most symbolically powerful building in classical Athens. I will show how autochthony as a social discourse is richly presented and confirmed again and again in the physical construction of the city.[2]

At this point, it is necessary to illustrate how I use sources in this chapter, since both the literature and material sources that I have selected for our reading need a

[1] Loraux (1993) 57. See also Loraux (2000) 30, Parker (1987) 194-95.
[2] It should especially be noted that by "common concern" or "social discourse", I do not mean a *single meaning* of myth but a *repertoire of concerns*, as I have argued in my introduction. This chapter lays a common ground for the concerns to be discussed in chapters 3 and 4, where we will read more individual and radical *ideas* in and about autochthony.

further explanation in terms of their time and genre. As we will see, in the first section, I present three rather late and very diverse texts for the three myths – one from Augustine, one from Apollodorus, and the other from Euripides – and in the second section, the source concerns material work, and the date of the Acropolis is much earlier than the texts in the first section. I have made this arrangement out of the following three concerns.

Firstly, for the late sources in the first section: as this chapter aims at understanding the repertoire of concerns of civic autochthony, which will require us to see what is mostly shared in all of those shifting versions, late sources can be very useful for this purpose. This is because myths in the later period have almost been textualized in written form, and these texts are able to show a relatively classical and common mythic summary of the versions that we can see in the 5th century. This tendency can especially be seen in Apollodorus, who tended to write his encyclopaedias of myths just through combining works of old poets which had gained classical status by that time.[3]

Secondly, for the diversity of those late sources: although all three stories can be found in Apollodorus, I have still selected two other texts in different genres by different authors since, with this large span of genre and time, we will be able to see that, even in such diverse narratives, there is still a common mythic thought and narrative pattern. Augustine is a Christian author who is famous for relating Greek stories with a bias. But, as we will see, even in his record of autochthony drawing on Varro, the narrative shares the same mythic pattern and narrative elements as other versions in the earlier period. So although Augustine's version could be post-classical, on the assumption that it reflects the classical conversation, a close look at it would allow us to see what follows from it. Euripides is famous for inventing new stories, but his play on Erechtheus, too, shows the very basic concern and mythic logic as presented in the other two texts. Therefore, with these three cases together, we can see a clear mythic system in which all of the mutations of autochthony possess a coherent concern, and this is exactly the common ground for us to understand all the mutations of classical autochthony in other chapters.

Thirdly, for the material sources in the second section: art and architecture are of course a very important part of Greek mythic presentation. To look at the Acropolis, the most important social space for the city, we will be able to see again how the same repertoire of concerns in myths is conveyed through a different cultural medium. But in

[3] Graf (1993) 193.

the mean time, this section is also designed as an examination of the mythic thought that we have read from the late sources in the first section. Since the construction of the Acropolis is much earlier than the writing of those texts, the mythic logic that is represented on the Acropolis will in turn verify the later record of the earlier popular narratives. A consistent concern is thus seen spanning from early to late. In this way, our reading of the social discourse as a common and popular mythic thought could be finally realized.

Now it is time to delve into the myths. Since our focus in literature and architecture concerns the relation between the human world and the divine world, let us begin with the most important divine figure in autochthony, Athena, who we will encounter again and again throughout the entire discussion.

I. Myths of Autochthony: An Imitation of Divine Order

Athena is undoubtedly the most crucial figure throughout the myths who forms all kinds of valuable links between the human world and the divine world. As we will see, it is she who takes part in the birth of the autochthonous child Erichthonius; who wins the divine *eris* in the reign of Kekrops; who honours Praxithea after her heroic deeds for her autochthonous city; and, most importantly, who owns the city. The unique way of naming "Athens" after Athena shows a direct connection between the *polis* and the goddess,[4] and to a great extent, with such a link, the city of Athens is not only under the protection of this famous goddess but is also granted all her distinct features.

However, being a city of Athena is not the only benefit that Athens derives from this goddess. To choose Athena as the core figure of the charter myth of Athens may also stem from another reason. What is more important, as I will argue, is that the city now gains a good chance of being connected to the divine world of Zeus through her. Athena could be said to be the most special figure in relation to Zeus and so, through this goddess, a strong link between the city and the divine world could be formed.

The special relationship between Athena and Zeus is firstly and straightforwardly seen in the former being the daughter of the latter. Born from Zeus, Athena naturally copies those crucial features of her father. Her wisdom and strength are direct characters

[4] Dowden [(2002) 85-6] suggests that the naming after a goddess is an exceptional case in the Greek world where the cities were usually named after heroes.

inherited from the king. And her great power is also an explicit manifestation of her natural connection with him. But such a similarity is by no means an ordinary honour because not every child of Zeus is so similar to the sovereign king. Only Athena: this goddess seems by nature to hold a rather privileged status and her being Zeus' favourite child has never changed.

From the narrative of Hesiod, we know that this special connection is thanks to her unique birth from Zeus' head. Since Athena was born by her father alone at the most crucial moment of his stabilization of the ruling order, through such a reproduction, Athena becomes not only a child who wholly belongs to her father, but also a *symbol* of his ruling principle, a mark of his triumph. This means that the goddess inherits not only the features but, more importantly, the will of her father and makes herself forever his follower. The daughter who entirely belongs to the sovereign king would thus never revolt against him. On the contrary, she defends the order of Zeus and the divine world becomes safe and secure. This is why Athena is always Zeus' favourite daughter. In this sense, it should not be too wrong to say that the order of this goddess is the order of her father.

Back to the city of Athena. Here we see that the close link between the city and the world of Zeus is formed through the goddess as a mediator between the two. Since the order of the city is set up and shaped by Athena, now with the goddess' special link with Zeus, Athenian autochthony finds a way to get closer to the divinity – or more specifically speaking, to the order of Zeus. [5]This point will be very important throughout our reading of autochthony since, as we will see, what autochthony finally aims at is precisely an imitation of such a divine order.

The link between autochthony and the order of Zeus is not a hypothesis. On a vase depicting an autochthony scene, we find the appearance of Zeus as a witness of this event (Figure 1, see also Figures 3 and 6).[6] With the child Erichthonius positioned in the centre of the painting, Zeus and Athena stand symmetrically on the two sides of the baby, looking at him intimately. This vase shows how close Zeus' connection is to autochthony and how the virgin Athena can rightly be understood. Apart from such vases, on the Acropolis –

[5] Herington (1963) 62-63.

[6] Loraux [1984 (131)] mentions this picture and the possible link between autochthony and Zeus briefly, but she could not explain "the strange presence of Zeus" in her theory since she did not take the framework of Zeus' order into account, and only paid attention to the authority of Zeus instead of specific principles that are held by this supreme god.

which we shall discuss in detail later – we find a representation of the close association between Athena and Zeus, too. On the pediment depicting the birth of Athena, for example, it is Zeus and Athena – explicitly these two gods – who stand in the centre accompanied by a group of other deities.[7] Furthermore, in literature, the rule of Zeus is also presented as a theological background for judgment and action. As we will see in our further discussion of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Ion* (chapter 3), the order of Zeus always plays a crucial role in supporting the authority of Athena.

Taking Zeus' order into account, we now can develop a picture different from that of Loraux concerning Athena's nature and the essence of Athenian autochthony. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, since Zeus' marriage to six goddesses is also part of his order, it is unlikely that the image of Athena would indicate an opposite principle to this pattern, *excluding* the female from the sexual system, as suggested by Loraux. It should be noted that Athena herself is first and foremost a female goddess and she herself is born from sexual activity.[8] It is exactly in the case of Athena that the female in the myth is best presented for inclusion in the sexual community with a securely controlled feminine power. Therefore, the goddess, through her special connection to Zeus, embodies an order that is not a *denial* but a *control* of women.

In the following discussion, in responding to Loraux's reading, I will demonstrate that, in autochthony, sexual society is still the central background where desire, sexual reproduction, and sexual relationships are all present; but that, in contrast to the archaic human world, Zeus' principle of "suppressing and subordinating the female to the male" in the divine world (see my discussion in chapter 1) is now directly applied to the human world. In the parallel between divine order and human order, the novelty of autochthony in mythic thinking in the classical period is thus shown: it is a new social order imitating the order of the divine world, through which human society makes a great effort, like Zeus, to take control of the sexual reproductive pattern that used to trouble it with endless disorder.

Let us now begin with the myth of Kekrops, the oldest king connected to Athenian autochthony.[9] Although always presented in a pre-human form, Kekrops is regarded as

[7] See also Parker [(1987) 192-193] on the close relation between autochthony and the order of Zeus-Athena.
[8] See my argument in chapter 1 section 2.
[9] It is interesting to note that the historical chronology of Greek just begins with Kekrops. In the Marmor Parium, Kekrops was recorded as the first king and named the country

the first autochthonous king in human society.[10] An account of the Attic tradition, paraphrased by Augustine in the *City of God*, depicts Kekrops as the founder of the rudiments of civilization and cultural custom (18.9). He is a half-snake, half-human earth-born king. This king is said to be the inventor of monogamy. Through this principle, Kekrops changed the previous situation where men and women united randomly like animals. In this sexual relationship, women and men were at first equal with each other;[11] but this equality changed dramatically after the famous divine *eris* between Athena and Poseidon who quarrelled over the right to rule Athens:

> Isto Cecrops oraculo accepto cives omnes utriusque sexus – mos enim tunc in eisdem locis erat, ut etiam feminae publicis consultationibus interessent – ad ferendum suffragium convocavit. Consulta igitur multitudine mares pro Neptuno, feminae pro Minerva tulere sententias et quia una plus inventa est feminarum, Minerva vicit.
>
> Tum Neptunus iratus marinis fluctibus exaestuantibus terras Atheniensium populatus est; quoniam spargere latius quaslibet aquas difficile daemonibus non est. Cuius ut iracundia placaretur, triplici supplicio dicit idem auctor ab Atheniensibus affectas esse mulieres, ut nulla ulterius ferrent suffragia, ut nullus nascentium maternum nomen acciperet, ut ne quis eas Athenaeas vocaret.Ita illa civitas, mater aut nutrix liberalium doctrinarum et tot tantorumque philosophorum, qua nihil habuit Graecia clarius atque nobilius, ludificantibus daemonibus et lite deorum suorum, maris et feminae, et de victoria per feminas feminae Athenas nomen accepit, et a victo laesa ipsam victricis victoriam punire compulsa est, plus aquas Neptuni quam Minervae arma formidans. Nam in mulieribus, quae sic punitae sunt, et Minerva quae vicerat victa est; nec adfuit

Kekropia in 1581 BCE. The country Kekropia was previously called Aktike after Aktaios the autochthon. Also see Dowden (2002) 51, table 3.1 and his discussion about Kekrops. The names of Athenians changed throughout history but their first name was always traced back to Kekrops.

[10] Parker [(1987) 193] interprets the pre-human image insightfully: "pre-human birth […] is juxtaposition of the two earth-born kings, an intermediate stage between wholly earthly and wholly human." In other words, such an image indicates a primary stage of the beginning of a civilization. Cf. Harrison (2014) 6-7.

[11] Women originally participated in political decisions. See Sissa and Detienne (2000) 211. Earlier, Bachofen [(1967)157] uses this detail about female political rights to make his famous argument concerning "Mother Right" in primitive society.

suffragatricibus suis ut suffragiorum deinceps perdita potestate et alienatis filiis a nominibus matrum Athenaeas saltem vocari liceret et eius deae mereri vocabulum quam viri dei victricem fecerant ferendo suffragium.

After Kekrops had received that oracle, he called together all the citizens of either sex – for at that time it was the custom in those parts that even women should be present at public deliberations – to cast their vote. And so, once the crowd had been consulted, the men declared their verdict in favour of Neptune (Poseidon), the women in favour of Minerva (Athena), and since one more woman was found, Minerva (Athena) won.

At that time Neptune in his anger ravaged the lands of the Athenians with raging sea waters – because it is not difficult for demons to disperse far and wide any waters whatsoever. To placate his anger, the same author writes that the women were afflicted with a threefold punishments by the Athenians – that not one of them should vote in the future; that no child should take a name from its mother; that no-one should call them "Athenian women". And so that state – the mother or nurse of the humanities and of so many and such great philosophers, compared with which Greece had nothing more famous or distinguished – through demons playing games and through a contest of their gods (a male and a female), from the victory of a female through female aid, received the name Athens. And, harmed by the conquered male, the state was forced to punish that very victory of the female victor, fearing the waters of Neptune more than the weapons of Minerva. For in the guise of the women, who were punished in this way, Minerva (Athena), who had been victorious, was also defeated; nor did she aid her own female voters so that, when they had lost the power of voting in the future and with their children estranged from the names of their mothers, it might at least have been allowed for them to be called Athenians, and to earn the nomenclature of this goddess, whom they had made the female victor over a male god by casting their vote.

As we can see from the text, Kekrops was summoned by the gods to be the judge, while both sexes (*utriusque sexus*) in the city were called together to take the vote as they are equal with each other. In the meeting, men and women separated, the married

couples split apart. The whole party of women took the side of Athena while all men supported Poseidon. Then we see that, based on the political principle, Athena won by a single vote, because women were found to be one more than the total of men (*quia una plus inventa est feminarum*). So the contest between the two gods, a male and a female (*maris et feminae*), ends up with the victory of the female through the female's votes (*victoria per feminas feminae*). However, as soon as the goddess claimed the power to represent the entire city, women were punished by the defeated Poseidon. But this time Athena no longer defended those women who voted for her, so women were successfully deprived of the political right to vote by the god. Because of Poseidon's punishment and Athena's consent, the women who were once victorious, were now defeated. With the change of their social status, women's power in marriage was also undermined: Athena transferred the significance of procreation from the mother to the earth.

Monogamous marriage and the divine *eris* constitute the main story of the myth and they are connected through the central figure Kekrops. This myth is not only found in vase paintings (Figure 2) but also, as we will see later, is depicted on the west pediment of the Parthenon temple.[12] The plot of the story is simple: it is about the founding of a civilized society; and the key turning point for the order establishment is the change of female status in sexual relationships. At first, women were equivalent to men since they also had an equal right to vote; but later they ended up being devalued both in the political sphere and in sexual procreation. Although women were not excluded from society, they became decisively powerless compared to men both in a real (politics) and metaphorical (procreation) sense. Men could now exercise a dominance over the sexual community as they alone were granted the right to make important civic decisions while women were suppressed to live in the *polis* in silence.

Certainly, the dramatic change is directly caused by the warth of Poseidon, but it is the women's vote itself that gives it a reason. During the vote, society was torn apart, married couples were divided and women stood against men. The abrupt division

[12] I only list several examples of the visual material on the theme of autochthony, which are in fact more abundant. For a richer collection and analysis of autochthonous visual arts, see the excellent work of Clements (2015), especially chapter 3. Although I agree with Clements that the densely iconographical presentations of autochthony in classical Athens must be closely related to Athenian history especially Athens' imperialism in their formation of civic identity and concept of ancestry, on the mythic level, non-historical meanings beyond specific time and space should still be read.

between the two sexes severely broke the matrimonial bond which was designed to unite men and women in a balanced and orderly way. In this battle, women were not only shown to be influential but also dangerous and out of men's control. The uncontrollable female is highlighted as a disturbing and destructive power for the stability of society. The peak moment in the story is when women conquered men through only one single vote. The victory by a narrow margin displays dramatically the anxiety and despair of men. If only they could get control of that single vote! But in vain. For men, social turbulence is caused by the absolute other, women, since they refuse to listen. Therefore, as we see, in order to restore the gender order, Poseidon, with the consent of Athena, declares the inferior status of women. In this way, women would have to subordinate themselves to the rule of men and cause no more division.

The punishement from the male god Poseidon is quite reasonable. It is because that this male god is offended by the power of women. But Athena's role in the entire event also needs to be explored in more detail, since although Athena is not the very agent who proposed the punishement, her consent is otherwise very important for the final result, without which Poseidon's appeals could not be fulfilled so smoothly and succussefully. Then how are we to understand Athena's concent and her turning against women, despite the fact that she was indeed supported by them throughout the vote?

It is understandable that women would choose Athena as their patron goddess (again here the binary opposition between the genders is emphasized), since mortal women, judging from the gender of Athena, had sufficient reason to believe that they identified with the female goddess. However, what they did not realize was the unique nature of this virgin Athena as a representative of Zeus' order. Here, the dual role of Athena both as a female goddess and a goddess in favour of masculine superiority becomes the core point for the crucial reversal. Athena allows the punishement of her supporters, women, precisely because she is a female representative who follows the rule of the male. In order to appease the male god's anger and also to restore the society to an ordered status, Athena chooses to sacrifice women's interests and allows a big compromise to Poseidon at the risk of being defeated herself. The female, for Athena, after all, should be submissive to the male.

This narrative is a typical aetiology which, by presenting one specific occasion, illustrates a more general case. Indeed, such a story would easily remind us of the repeated motif in the *Theogony*: the suppression and self-suppression of the female in the

establishment of divine order. The cause and effect in these two cases is so similar that together they help to further fix the role of women and give the narrative *per se* a kind of stability. Now the myth of Kekrops becomes a universal picture: sexual conflicts lead to disorder. And by depriving the right of women and making them yield to the dominance of men, Athena's revolution in Athens eliminates the instability of the binary opposition in human society and establishes a hierarchical order with monistic features, reflecting that which Zeus accomplished in his own revolution. The divine *eris* is actually also human *eris*.[13] The triumph is a dual victory: once Athena wins, men win.

Our second myth is about Erichthonius,[14] usually known as the earth-born founding hero (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 3.14.6.):

> Ἀθηνᾶ παρεγένετο πρὸς Ἥφαιστον, ὅπλα κατασκευάσαι θέλουσα. ὁ δὲ ἐγκαταλελειμμένος ὑπὸ Ἀφροδίτης εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν ὥλισθε τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς, καὶ διώκειν αὐτὴν ἤρξατο· ἡ δὲ ἔφευγεν […] ἐπειρᾶτο συνελθεῖν. ἡ δὲ ὡς σώφρων καὶ παρθένος οὖσα οὐκ ἠνέσχετο· ὁ δὲ ἀπεσπέρμηνεν εἰς τὸ σκέλος τῆς θεᾶς. ἐκείνη δὲ μυσαχθεῖσα ἐρίῳ ἀπομάξασα τὸν γόνον εἰς γῆν ἔρριψε. φευγούσης δὲ αὐτῆς καὶ τῆς γονῆς εἰς γῆν πεσούσης Ἐριχθόνιος γίνεται […] ἐν δὲ τῷ τεμένει τραφεὶς Ἐριχθόνιος ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς Ἀθηνᾶς, ἐκβαλὼν Ἀμφικτύονα ἐβασίλευσεν Ἀθηνῶν.
>
> Athena came to Hephaestus, wanting to fashion arms. But he, having been forsaken by Aphrodite, felt a strong sexual desire for Athena, and began to pursue her; but she fled […] when he attempted to join with her. She, being a self-controlled virgin, would not submit to him. So he poured out his sperm on the leg of the goddess. Feeling disgust, she wiped off the seed with wool and threw it on the Earth. As she fled, the seed fell onto the Earth, and Erichthonius was produced […] Having been nurtured by Athena in person in her sanctuary, Erichthonius expelled Amphictyon and became king of Athens.

[13] Or we could say it is *more* about human *eris*. The central point of this myth concerns not the two gods but the human beings. The conflict is presented in a dramatic form: by virtue of gender – instead of by the virtue of the two gods – human society is split into two parts.

[14] Kekrops' only son Erysichthon died without a child. In most accounts, Erichthonius/ Erechtheus succeed Kekrops in the kingship. See Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 3.14.2; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.2.6. On the Kekropid Erysichthon, see Parker (1987) 200, Gourmelen (2004), 142, Skempis (2008) 148.

According to Apollodorus, Athena visited the smith god Hephaestus to ask for some weapons. Hephaestus was so overwhelmed by his sexual desire (ἐπιθυμίαν) for the charming goddess that he tried to seduce her. Athena, insisting on maintaining her virginity, fled. Hephaestus caught Athena and wanted to rape her. The virgin fought him off but Hephaestus' sperm was ejaculated onto the thigh of Athena. In disgust, the virgin goddess wiped it off with a scrap of wool (ἔριον) and threw it onto the earth (γῆ). As she fled, the child was born from the earth. She named him Erichthonius ("wool-earth/struggle-earth"). Kekrops witnessed the entire process and even his daughters were once commanded to take care of the baby. But later, since the daughters disobeyed Athena's instructions, the goddess took over the baby and nurtured him in person. When Erichthonius grew up, Athena granted Athenian kingship to him and he became the king of Athens.

Various vase paintings were also found presenting this myth (Figures 1, 3, 4, 5).[15] It is a continuation of the story of Kekrops, which is associated in the same mythic complex. Chronologically speaking, after the primordial history of the establishment of Athenian social order (Kekrops), the first human king of the *polis* is appointed by Athena in the next generation. In this myth, we immediately see that the social founder Kekrops is presented as a witness of the earth-born event and this story is also presented in the same narrative pattern: it starts with a kind of disorder but ends with an establishment and maintaining of order. Through the interaction between the divine agents and human characters, the myth also shows a mythic imagination for human society to imitate divine order.

As with the myth of Kekrops, the myth of Erichthonius is also set in a sexual society, where male (Kekrops) and female (his wife Aglaurus and three daughters) live together. But, unlike the former myth, the latter does not begin with a troublesome divine *eris* but, rather, divine *eros* between a god and a goddess – another disturbing sexual relationship, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Athena is alluring. Hephaestus' carnal desire for

[15] It is noticeable that the earth is usually presented as the goddess Gaia instead of merely physical soil. We see here, in every picture, the earth is the goddess. Therefore, there is a gap between the mythic narrative of autochthony and indigenous autochthony which takes the earth literally as ground for inhabitation.

Athena is vividly portrayed.[16] His chasing after the virgin goddess in spite of her escape dramatically reveals the unrestrainable attraction between the two sexes. The highlight of the pursuit is of course Hephaestus' ejaculation. The god's sexual excitement is so strong that he cannot even wait for a union before he reaches his climax. The word that the text uses to describe Hephaestus' ejaculation is ἀποσπερμαίνω (to pour out): he wants to make love so passionately that this intense sexual desire could not be controlled at all. This vivid picture incisively presents an irresistible carnal passion which is out of control. The danger of instability and potential disorder is implied.

Hephaestus' excessive sexual desire would probably remind us of the pre-Zeus god Uranos who, according to the *Theogony*, is also a figure endowed with lustful *eros* who cannot stop having sex with his partner Gaia. The immoderate sexual union gives rise to the violent rebellion of the goddess, and her conflict with the male god further leads to generations of chaotic battles between sexes.[17] This is a good example of how erotic *eros* gives rise to disastrous *eris*. The parallel between Hephaestus and Uranos could fit the myth of autochthony into a similar narrative model in the archaic myth and people may thus expect a similar ending for the autochthonous story. Since the sexual relationship between Gaia and Uranos ends up with a bloody castration of the god's genitals, would the incontinent carnal desire of Hephaestus result in the same tragedy?

This time, it seems not. The classical myth takes the ending in a different direction from that of the archaic version. Hephaestus was not castrated even though Athena is likely to have the power to do so.[18] Instead, he was saved from his doomed tragedy and

[16] For me, Hephaestus is as important as Athena. Although this male god is absent in the second half of the myth, his desire promotes the development of the narrative and his sperm is the most direct contribution to the birth of the child. In this regard, I disagree with Loraux's reading which only take this god as an irrelevant "pure observer" [(1993) 61] of the earth-born event. The significant role of Hephaestus may be even more prominent at the end of the 6th century BCE., when there is a tradition that the earth-born child is given to the father Hephaestus instead of Athena. See Parker's discussion on this unique point. Parker (1987) 194.

[17] See my chapter 1.

[18] In many ways, the power and status of Athena is shown to be superior to that of Hephaestus. Firstly, as Loraux [(1993) 131-34] has pointed out that the birth of Hephaestus from Hera the mother must "take second place" to that of Athena who is born of the father; secondly, the natural feature of the lame god indicates his weaker ability than the goddess who embodies both strength (goddess of war) and intelligence (goddess of wisdom); thirdly, Zeus' swallowing of Metis in fear of the threat of the soon-to-be-born Athena implies that her overall power can even match the power of Zeus. Therefore, Athena is much more powerful than Hephaestus.

even saw a happy ending for the story: the future king of Athens was born from the earth after the sperm-covered wool was thrown onto the ground. With such a reversed ending, the classical myth offers a different vision of the difficult issue of *eris* and *eros*. So what leads to this different ending?

Athena once again becomes the core figure of this crucial reversal. We will see that it is actually her virginity that saves the tragedy. What makes things different is the fact that Athena exhibits entirely the opposite behaviour of Gaia in the pre-Zeus era. Unlike the cunning goddess who continually had sex with her husband and then, taking advantage of her sexuality, went against the male dominance, Athena, even though she is sexually charming, defends the rule of the male with her virginity. Facing similar trouble, the daughter of Zeus just flees, without having any further interactions with the partner. This smart stratagem in effect maintains the established order of Zeus in a double sense: on the one hand, by fleeing away, Athena avoids the sexual conflict that might happen owing to her further head-on collision with the male god; on the other hand, by insisting on her virginity, she also maintains a positive feminine character under the rule of Zeus instead of abusing her feminine power of sexual allure. When sex is avoided, the trouble caused by the sexual procreation is also avoided.

Athena's attempt to defend the order of Zeus is explicitly represented in a vase painting where Zeus witnesses Athena avoiding sex with Hephaestus (Figure 6). Through suppressing both the erotic and violent powers of the female, Athena maintains herself in an absolutely passive status for the sake of the patriarchal order. Feminine threat to disorder is thus removed. The tragedy of Hephaestus does not happen: the immoderate sexual union and the chaotic battles of the pre-Zeus era are eventually prevented.[19]

Sexual disorder is controlled at this stage, but this founding myth goes much further. Since child-birth is at any rate necessary in human society, now it is time to think of whether there is a way to have a baby born in the sexual pattern but which keeps threats to social disorder away. Here is a scheme presented by autochthony. Another female agent, the Earth (*gē*), appears. The wool with sperm was thrown onto the ground and, in this way, Erichthonius was born from the earth. Does this birth potentially carry a new threat of sexual disorder? Not at all. As we can see, the child was born safely, and the ending of the story is rather happy. Why does the involvement of the Earth make such

[19] On the significance of Athena's virginity in the order of Zeus, see the discussion in chapter 1.

a big difference? In order to answer this question, it is necessary for us to have a further look at the entire procreation.

This birth is actually rather uncanny in many senses. With the participation of the earth, there are three parent-like agents in the entire event: Athena is the female who triggers Hephaestus' ejaculation; Hephaestus is the male who offers the sperm to make the baby; *and* Gaia is the female who provides the womb to nurture the baby. But in such a pattern, can we say that they are parents of Erichthonius at all? Yes and no: since all of them have participated partially in the procreation, they are indeed contributors to the birth of the child; but since none of them have really gone through the entire process, it is difficult to identify them as normal parents. This pattern of procreation makes the issue of sexuality rather complex: is the baby born from one, two or three? Somewhat unclear. But it is such a strange combination that finally breaks the sexual procreation pattern and prevents sexual conflict from happening. We may wonder what exactly is the trick in such a scheme?

We will see that the trick still lies in the virginity. In effect, not only is Athena's action a defence of virginity, but Gaia, the womb, is also presented as holding a virgin status. In this myth, what is absurd is that there is no sex at all among these males and females but that, even without sex, a child is still somehow born from them. As we can see, their sexual activities are rather fragmented. There are obvious gaps between Athena arousing Hephaestus' desire, Hephaestus ejaculating and Gaia getting foetation. Through breaking the ordinary pattern of dual-sexed procreation into three independent parts, none of the three agents could claim a full responsibility for, and thereby total control of, the sexual reproduction and the baby (nor can the baby really seek help from the "parents"). Without being involved in any sexual union, both Athena and Gaia are beyond the reach of dangerous *eros* and *eris*. So in the end, all of the three agents, both the male and the female, although having contributed partially to the sexual procreation, are in fact detached from sexual procreation and thus are far removed from the potential sexual conflict that is cultivated by the procreation pattern. This scheme seems to be a substitute for Zeus' monistic scheme. Since Hephaestus is not as strong as Zeus, who could use his power to combine two sexes into one (as we have seen in the case of Metis), the new procreation pattern now divides the two into three so that the power of the female could be significantly reduced.

What is more, as we can see here, Gaia is presented as a rather passive figure – more like physical ground –[20] whose only action is to accept the male's sperm without any attempt to seduce (no desire), interact (no sex) or rebel (no violence) against the male. Compared to the Earth Gaia in the pre-Zeus world in the Hesiodic tradition, this classical Earth in the post-Zeus era has entirely lost its cunning, violent and dangerous female features, and her womb also changes dramatically. Unlike the womb of the pre-Zeus Gaia, which always serves as a dark space for sexual desire and concealment, what is left here is only a physically passive instrument. Structurally speaking, the sense of the womb as a space independent of the outside world has been greatly reduced. When the child is brought out by Athena from the earth immediately after its birth – just as a farmer harvests fruits once they are ripe – what is presented here is only a fertile upper ground without a deep dark underworld.[21]

Now Gaia is no longer a threat, neither is Athena. Through removing the feminine power of both *eros* and *eris* from the two female agents, the reproduction becomes a controllable – and possibly dull – affair. Without any chance of concealment – the most prominent feminine feature – the child, of course, could not contrive any cunning plans with either of the two mothers. The image of Erichthonius is always mild and pleasant without any indication of disorder. As the most dangerous elements are forcedly removed from the birth process, a safe model of sexual procreation is thus established. Here we see again the post-Zeus principles that we have discussed repeatedly in the previous chapter and in our first autochthonous myth:[22] in a sexual world, order is established and maintained through the suppression of feminine powers.

[20] In the account of Apollodorus, the earth is γῆ which implies its physical features as soil and ground. Although the image of Gaia appears more frequently on the vase, she is not shown as a cunning goddess as in the archaic tradition but is only presented as a concrete figure embodying the soil earth. Therefore, although γῆ is often metaphorically referred to as the Mother Earth, she does not function as the original female figure.

[21] There are, of course, many reasons contributing to the transformation of Gaia's image in classical time. Besides the change within the logic of the myths, indigenous use of the Earth as physical soil and civic use of the Earth as a political concept of fatherland are also important for the re-shaping of this mythic figure into a more neutral, innocent and even good feminine character. For the civic and political use of the γῆ, see Loraux (1986) and (1993).

[22] For the post-Zeus features, such as the male's suppression of the female and female's self-subordination to the patriarchal order, see my chapter 1.

In fact, Athena's attitude towards sexual procreation is consistent throughout the story. What she is really concerned about is not the result but the means of the reproduction. As we see, the virgin goddess does not reject the child itself but is more worried about the potential threat of disorder that could appear along with sexual union. As long as the threat is removed and as long as gender order in sexual society is secured, Athena is happy to accept its production. This attitude, from the very beginning of her act, has already been indicated and it further explains her transformed kindness to the earth as well as the newly-born baby.[23] The emphases on the virginity of Athena and the passive role of the Earth are compatible: they both symbolize an elimination of the threat of feminine power in the sense of *eros* and *eris*. In this aspect, the pattern of sexual procreation in the earth-born reproduction could be a good scheme for human society to follow the value of Athena.

Athenians called this kind of sexual procreation autochthonous birth and they addressed themselves as "children of [such] autochthony".[24] Being educated by the divine agent *in person* Erichthonius learns very well the order of Zeus which the virgin goddess values. When he grows up, he will carry out the goddess' principle in the human *polis* and follow the order of Zeus. As the offspring of this earth-born king, Athenians should certainly also respect such order. Admittedly, myth is myth – in reality such a procreation pattern would never be realized. But the principle and value that are indicated and dramatized in the myth are otherwise crucial. In the real human society, sexual desire remains, and sexual procreation is still necessary. But through a self-conscious attempt

[23] The name of Erichthonius is worthy of discussion. Besides the more common etymology as "wool-earth", which indicates explicitly the earth-born myth, there is another etymology proposed by many contemporary writers: "trouble /struggle -earth". This indicates the rather intrinsic mythic narrative of autochthony. At first, the baby is "a trouble" who is likely to remind the goddess of the "disgusting" affair. Only when the trouble is born without any biological connection with the virgin goddess, Athena could feel a real release. The γῆ as a perfect substitute for Athena's womb solves the problem and saves Athena from the situation with which she struggles. In this perspective, the "wool-earth" may also function similarly by indicating the material that Athena uses after Hephaestus' disgusting ejaculation. Both etymologies imply a change and reversal of Athena. For the "strife/struggle-earth" interpretation, see Pseudo-Hyginus, *Fabulae* 166: "They named him Erichthonius, because *eris* in Greek means 'strife', and *khthon* means 'earth'." Pseudo-Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2. 13: "From this the snake Erichthonius was born, who derives his name from the earth and their struggle."

[24] For Athenians addressing themselves as "children of autochthony", see Aeschylus *Eumenides* 13, Sophocles *Ajax* 201-02. See study by Shapiro (1995) 1. Blok (2009b) 152.

at restricting sexual *eros* and *eris*, social order could still be desired. And as we see in Athenian history, this principle was closely followed. Seed and soil were a common metaphor for sexual procreation in the city of autochthony. By linking women to the passive earth, their sexual charm is removed. Gone as well is women's dangerous power. Living in the *polis* with men, women are to be silent again.

The last myth is the myth of Erechtheus. By the term "Erechtheus" I refer to the adult king Poseidon-Erechtheus who fights with Eumolpos in the war between Athens and Eleusis, and who is a different figure from the earth-born king Erichthonius. Sometimes, Erechtheus is confused with Erichthonius and the former may share the same identity with the latter in our second story. In the oral tradition where myth was always a repertoire of shifting stories instead of a tidy single system, it was not uncommon that elements or characters can be versions of each other. The more popular the myths and the more similarities the two figures share, the easier it is for them to be confused. Within the circle of autochthony this phenomenon can be detected, although the former also had his own independent storyline, that is the war with Eumolpos. [25] Regarding the perplexing relationship between Erichthonius and Erechtheus, there have been many interpretations contributed by previous scholars.[26] For current purposes, I am not going

[25] In this case, I chose to address the earth-born child "Erichthonius" instead of "Erechtheus" in case of confusion. But it should be noted that, in some sources, it was "Erechtheus" who is the protagonist of this myth.

[26] There have been many debates on the relationship between Erechtheus and Erichthonius. Different arguments propose different interpretations of the confusion between the two mythic figures. Lang (1954) examines the genealogy from Kekrops to Demophon, and argues that Erechtheus and Erichthonius must have changed places. Parker [(1987) 190-201] states that Erechtheus and Erichthonius are "joint heirs to a single mythological inheritance". According to Burkert (1983), Erechtheus and Erichthonius are only alternatives: "It was only Erechtheus that was used in the cult as it has the original non-Greek name, while the name of Erichthonius was a hellenising neologism because of the etymology." Cf. Ermatinger (1987) 37-62, Kron (1976) and (1988) , Loraxu (1995) 88 and (2000) chapter 3, Dowden (2002) 86f, Cole (2008), Pelling (2009), Forsdyke (2012), Fragoulaki (2013) 235-6, Stehle (2013). But on the other hand, all the debates show that it is actually impossible to make a clear version/story of Erichthonius or Erechtheus, even though sometimes people make precise distinctions between the two figures when some literatures bestow different characteristics and features upon the two figures. As I argued in my Introduction, this is in fact an outstanding feature of Greek myth. Multiple version of myths are themselves confusing, but the Greek mythic system left a space for such confusion and in its early stage seemed not to attempt to amend it, which, speaking from a positive perspective, provides the system with a vigorous power for mythic thinking and intellectual probing.

to indulge in this endless debate but I would like to mention one point which distinguishes Erechtheus from Erichthonius: unlike Erichthonius, who was always represented as the child born from the soil, Erechtheus can be an adult king and the war in Eleusis concerns only him.

According to fragments of Euripides' play *Erechtheus*,[27] the story of Erechtheus happens after the founding of the Athenian *polis*. At that time Eleusis was at war with Athens and its violent attack had already threatened the existence of this city. The Eleusinians also turned to the Thracians for help. The prophet Eumolpos, a son of Poseidon, was presented as a leader of the Thracian army to challenge Erechtheus. In face of the fierce battle, Erechtheus stressed the autochthonous identity of the Athenian city, and then he went to Delphi to find a solution to the battle. The oracle told him that in order to save the city, he needed to sacrifice one of his three daughters. Erechtheus went back home and told the oracle to his wife Praxithea, who then agreed with the plan (Euripides *Erechtheus*, 360. 4-37.):

> ἐγὼ δὲ δώσω παῖδα τὴν ἐμὴν κτανεῖν.
> λογίζομαι δὲ πολλά· πρῶτα μὲν πόλιν
> οὐκ ἄν τιν' ἄλλην τῆσδε βελτίω λαβεῖν,
> ᾗ πρῶτα μὲν λεὼς οὐκ ἐπακτὸς ἄλλοθεν,
> αὐτόχθονες δ' ἔφυμεν.
> […]
> ἔπειτα τέκνα τοῦδ' ἔκατι τίκτομεν,
> ὡς θεῶν τε βωμοὺς πατρίδα τε ῥυώμεθα.
> […]
> τήμῃ δὲ παιδὶ στέφανος εἷς μιᾷ μόνῃ

[27] I choose the version of Euripides because the play was composed when the Erechtheum on the Acropolis built (430-420 BCE), according to Calder (1969) and Clairmont (1971). This version might be closest to the contemporary discourse. However, we should also note that the *Erechtheus* is a tragedy and its ironic features should be taken into account. This war is also mentioned by Apollodorus, *Bibilotheca* 3.15.4., Plato, *Menexenus* 239b, Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 68, Demosthenes, *Epitaphios* 8 and 27. For narrative and discussion about Erechtheus confronting Eumolpos, see Diller (1937) 51, Dowden (2002) 84, Graf (1996) 99-101, Sissa and Detienne (2000) 142-3, 215ff. On the evolution of different versions about war between Eumlopos and Erechtheus, see also Parker (1987) 200-204 and Kearns (1989) 113-115. Jouan and Van Looy [(2002) 100-109] try to reconstruct the story plot of Euripides' *Erechtheus*.

πόλεως θανούσῃ τῆσδ᾽ ὕπερ δοθήσεται,
καὶ τὴν τεκοῦσαν καὶ σὲ δύο θ᾽ ὁμοσπόρω
σώσει.
[…]
τὴν οὐκ ἐμὴν <δὴ> πλὴν φύσει δώσω κόρην
θῦσαι πρὸ γαίας.

I, shall offer my child to be killed.
I take many things into consideration. The first of them is that
I could get no other city better than this.
Firstly, we are not alien people from elsewhere, instead,
we are born autochthonous.
[…]
Secondly, we bear our children for this reason,
to protect the gods' altars and our fatherland.
[…]
my child will be honoured and be given a single crown
when she dies for the city,
and will save her mother who begot her, as well as you
and her two sisters springing from the same parents
[…]
This girl is (in fact) not mine except in birth.
I shall sacrifice her for the sake of our land.

This is the most famous speech of Praxithea. She said that she must offer to sacrifice her daughter because she belongs to the city and they are born autochthonous. By confirming her alliance with men, two sexes are now united in the single city (πόλεως δ᾽ ἀπάσης τοὔνομ᾽ ἕν) and this is why Praxithea as a woman is willing to sacrifice her daughter. After this speech, one of Erechtheus' daughters was sacrificed for the sake of the city and her other two sisters committed suicide after her death. As predicted by the oracle, Erechtheus won the battle: he killed Eumolpos, thwarted Eleusis and its Thracian ally. But at this point, Poseidon, raging at the death of his son Eumolpos, split the rock in the Acropolis with his trident and the crack of the earth swallowed Erechtheus. Athena

intervened to turn Poseidon back into the sea. She then told Praxithea, the only survivor of the family, that her daughters would become goddesses, being worshipped in a cult; and Erechtheus would also be deified and would bear the name of his rival as Erechtheus-Poseidon; while Praxithea herself would become her priestess.

Like the previous two myths, this story also begins with a crisis of disorder (the war) and ends with a restoration to order (Athena's glorification). Although Erechtheus died in this event, he gained twin victories: first, he won the battle and thus defended the *polis*; second, he as well as his family gained a good reputation and received significant divine praise from the goddess Athena Polias. It is clear that both of the two happy endings are thanks to the central event of the myth, i.e. Erechtheus sacrificing his virgin daughter. It is this action that leads to the realization of the oracle and in effect changes the situation of the war.

As many scholars have noticed, especially in the scene of the sacrifice, Erechtheus' wife Praxithea plays the most important role, which makes the sacrifice a unique event.[28] Instead of going against Erechtheus, Praxithea supports her husband to sacrifice their own daughter. Her affirmation of Erechtheus' right to do so turns the potentially tragic ending into a blessed one. In Greek myth and literature, virginal sacrifice is a somewhat common theme, but in most cases, when the father is supposed to kill his own daughter, the man's attempt would usually lead to either strong objection or to violent revenge by the mother.[29] One of the best-known examples is, of course, Clytemnestra (who kills her husband Agamemnon for the sake of Iphigeneia, her sacrificed daughter).[30] As we will discuss further in the next chapter, in many aspects, the image of Praxithea is a reversal

[28] Most scholars take Praxithea as a positive character though interpretation remains controversial. Detienne, for example, suggests that she is a good example of the women of Athens, "who are autochthonous with no complexes about it." See Sissa and Detienne (1989) 245. Loraux rejects Detienne's plain reading by pointing out that, although Praxithea is a heroine in some ways, she is a tragic figure sharing the similar tragic fate with Oedipus. See Loraux (1993) 248-9. While Loraux is right to point out the tragic feature of the entire play, I still reserve my view that Praxithea is a bright figure – an ideal Athenian woman in the imagination of the Athenian man. See also Nimis (2007) 409 and note 32. Cf. Rutherford (2011) 96-98.

[29] On the study of virgin sacrifice in tragedy, see Scodel (1996), Lloyd-Jones (1983), Burkert (1983) 58-72, Henrichs (1980), Foley (2009), Mitchell-Boyask (1993), Blume (2012).

[30] Certainly, in the last scene of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, there is a reason for the presence of Aegisthus. But Iphigeneia is never ignored as a crucial causation for Clytemnestra's action throughout the entire play.

of Clytemnestra. The two stories of "sacrifice and salvation" echo strongly with one another in their similar plots and motifs, while their opposite endings with different reactions from the female characters spell out how crucial the role of a mother in this event could be. This contradiction between the two myths further reveals the uniqueness of Praxithea's behaviour.

No matter how much tragic conflict should be read in Euripides' play,[31] the image of Praxithea in the myth does structurally present a positive feminine figure in the order of autochthony. She is portrayed as a heroine, who is generous and courageous enough to offer her daughter to the army to support her husband's fighting. Regardless of her intimate connection with her daughter as a mother, Praxithea just gives up her power as a mother and in turn justifies the male action by yielding herself to her husband's decision *willingly*. By doing so, Erechtheus is able to complete the sacrifice without any resistance and thus avoids a further disorder caused by his partner within the *polis*.

Here we see again the familiar pattern of the autochthony story: the surrender of the female to the dominance of the male. The self-suppression of the female ensures a united society as a whole. When Praxithea proclaims her position with the famous sentence "*we* are born autochthonous" with a plural form of the verb ἔφυμεν (*Erech*. 360. 8) – not just the men are born autochthonous, but "we", i.e. men and women are autochthonous citizens –[32] she not only incorporates women into this male-dominated system but also affirms the same social values and social order that they share with men. This claim becomes even more powerful and significant when it is made in the context of a war in which Athens needs to fight alongside others as a unity. Metaphorically the two sexes united into one in a hierarchical, monistic, and stable order. If the sacrifice of the virgin is a test for the order of the autochthonous city, Praxithea provides a satisfactory answer. In many ways Praxithea is rather like a mortal Athena with her firm position on

[31] It is widely accepted both in antiquity and in modern scholarship that the tragedy *Erechtheus* of Euripides, performed during the Athenian-Spartan truce of 423-2, is composed in a stronger patriotic sense rather than a tragic sense. This feature makes this play distinctive amongst Euripides' works. Many Greek politicians and orators took advantage of this theme in their speeches. For example, Demosthenes talked about the myth and then immediately compared the Trojan and Persian wars. By mentioning Erechtheus sacrificing his daughter in order to save the city, he emphasized the patriotism of the myth. See Nilsson (1951) 87. Lycurgus in his *Against Leocrates* 92 also quotes the myth as an expression of patriotism. See Scodel (2007) 140, Sonnino (2010), Clements (2015) 46-54.

[32] Euripides, *Erechtheus*, Frag 360. 8: αὐτόχθονες δ' ἔφυμεν.

the male side. This woman, as narrated in the myth, deserves the admiration of the divine goddess.

As we have seen, although the narratives focus diversely on different kings, generations, and historical periods, the set of myths under the same name of autochthony share a common motif and narrative pattern. Through a change from disorder to order, conflict to harmony, and turbulence to peace, the myths show a great achievement that human society accomplished: a stable social order in the human world has been established.

In fact, set in a sexual context, the myths are throughout aware of the essential condition of the human world that was imagined in the traditional framework. The mythic world in autochthony from the very beginning – even in the so-called myth of origin (Erichthonius) – is a normal sexual world in which sexual desire, gender conflict, and social disorder happen from time to time: this is a typical human world under the rule of Zeus in the archaic tradition. It is within this context that the autochthonous stories – no matter whether it is about a conflicted vote, an earth-born birth or virgin sacrifice – present their central concern about social order, and ask how to deal with an already-extant sexual relationship and sexual procreation pattern and how the two sexes, especially the female, react to sexual tension when conflicts emerge.

The myths, through intricate interactions between the human world and the divine world, present a plausible scheme in response to the archaic tragic vision: to follow the advice of Athena and to imitate the order of Zeus. It is not an accident that all the three myths end with the glorification and confirmation of Athena's authority. As both the representative and defender of the order of Zeus, Athena demonstrates a way for the construction of human order. Through the suppressing and self-surrendering of the female in the male-dominated hierarchical order, a transformed monistic structure is formed for sexual society. In this way, the goddess revives the divine order of Zeus in the human world,[33] which allows human society to gain a stable order that is constantly threatened with dissolution. In this unique mythic discourse, Athens not only establishes its social order in imitation of divine order, but also, with the blessing of the goddess,

[33] It is noticeable that equality of status between man and woman is first tried by Kekrops but it turns out to be a failure. Athena knows very well the dangerous of keeping sexual relationships in an equal but unstable dual structure – a lesson she learns from Zeus. Therefore, later, Athena firmly stands on the male side. This is a strong shift of the social construction, a revolution which evokes the revolution and rule of Zeus.

justifies the legitimacy of this framework, thereby forming a powerful social discourse concerning both man and woman in society.

II. The Acropolis: Autochthony Constructed

Autochthony is not only narrated orally in the form of myth telling, but is also materialized. We have briefly seen how the three autochthonous stories are richly presented on vase paintings. In this section we will see how autochthony as a strong social discourse is delivered through physical buildings in the city of Athens. The architecture that we are going to investigate is the Acropolis, the symbol of the social success of Athens and its imperial power. Represented on the Acropolis, the influence of autochthony on the entire *polis* is undoubtedly huge.[34] But what is more important here is that through a spatial construction, autochthony is systematically and comprehensively expressed in a visible way, and with the Parthenon temple and Erechtheum working in tandem, we will see more clearly the theological and cosmological framework in which the mythic imagination of autochthony is embedded.

What does the Acropolis attempt to present for the discourse of autochthony? Following the theory of her political reading, Loraux argued for a representation of democratic ideology by the buildings based on a close link between the "earth-born" Erichthonius in the Erechtheum and the Pandora at the base of Athena's statue in the Parthenon temple. However, this proposal might be weak since it only focuses on two single figures (Pandora and Erichthonius) without sufficient consideration of many other crucial elements in the Acropolis, especially the other two autochthonous kings Erechtheus and Kekrops, who are also worshipped in the Erechtheum, to say nothing of the cosmological and theological presentation richly and systematically shown in the Parthenon temple.[35] It should be pointed out that autochthony is not an isolated

[34] Rebuilt at the peak of classical Athens and under Pericles, the Parthenon and Erechtheum were buildings of great political and cultural significance. As Loraux points out, the Acropolis together with the events in the festival of Panathenaea closely associate the myth of autochthony with the civic *polis*. See Loraux (1993) 48.

[35] In fact, there is little evidence that the earth-born child Erichthonius in the story of Athena-Hephaestus was worshipped in the Erechtheum as there was no shrine to him. The only trace of this autochthonous king on the Acropolis is in the fragments of friezes of the Erechtheum, which, according to the reconstruction of Pallat (1912, 1935, 1937), possibly depict a scene of his birth from the *Gē*. See also Clements (2015) who discusses the friezes following the idea of Pallat. However, the friezes are so fragmentary that

discourse on the Acropolis; instead, the spatial construction in the overall context of the entire space high up in the city sets autochthony in conversation with other buildings. Therefore, in order to understand the significance of autochthony on the Acropolis, it is necessary for us to take the grander picture of the whole space into account. Through examining the structural settings of both Parthenon temple/ Erechtheum and their relation, autochthony in construction can be more comprehensively understood.

Now let us firstly turn to the Parthenon. Although the Parthenon is built for the worship of Athena – with an amazingly grand statue of the goddess in the cella –[36] it is rarely regarded as only a religious site for ritual performances.[37] One of the unique features of this construction is its combination of the divine world and contemporary human society in the united space of the temple.[38] Although such arrangement was rather unusual at that time and was even at risk of being rebuked for profanation,[39] it

scholars still find it very hard to reach agreement on their content. But even if the friezes show the birth story of Erichthonius, the other two autochthonous kings worshipped *in* the temple should still not be overlooked. Cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (2011) 89.

[36] Through ten years of labour, Pheidias completed the cult-image of Athena Parthenos, the most spectacular golden statue that had ever been built, at the height of over 10 meters tall, which was worshipped in the middle of the cella. On the statue of Athena, see Hurwit (1995) 171. Another bronze statue was also produced by Pheidias. It is usually dated to around 460 BCE and was called "Athena Promachos" or "Athena Lemnia".

[37] Despite some on-going debates on the religious function of the Acropolis, such as the mythic interpretation by Connelly (2014), the importance of the civic function of the Parthenon is widely agreed. The representation of Athenian religion and mythology was never independent of social movements. On the social context for myth and religion, see Dowden (2002) 20-22, Parker (1987) 189. "Believing in the gods" was of course widely accepted as a social norm: Sissa and Detienne (2000) 167-169. See also Vernant (1988) 107, who argues that one function of gods is to impose social order on human beings. Nilsson is even more radical by suggesting that "state and religion were one […] Greek religion was social, collective, and played a very important part in state politics." See Nilsson (1951) 14. On social importance to myth and religion, see also Nilsson (1951) 53, 62, Loraux (2000) chapter 3 and (1993) 6-8, 37-41.

[38] Connelly [(2014) 96-103] suggests a historical reading on the presentation of the four sides of metopes. She places the four events in a chronological sequence from Golden Age to Late Bronze Age. This reading is inspiring in our understanding of the ancient human world (mythic-historical) as a bridge to connect the mythic divine world and historical contemporary human world. On the temporal progression from ancient origin to contemporary present as a model of the interaction between divine world and human world, also see duBois (1991) 61-63. She takes this pattern to suggest how the ancient history of Centauromachy and Amazonomachy is linked to the contemporary idea of self and other.

[39] Lawrence (1972) 144: "never before had a contemporary subject been treated on a religious building and no subsequent Greek instance is known."

nevertheless reveals the profound thought of Athens in integrating human society and the divine world into one comprehensive system. This system, as we will see, offers the basic framework for the presentation of autochthony on the Acropolis.

From the pediments and metopes to the friezes, a consistent order of the two corresponding worlds is displayed, and the order of autochthony is embedded in such a construction. The pediments show two analogous events of order. On the east side, divine order is sculpted (Figure 7). It is a united image of the celestial and the terrestrial, which presents the cooperative work of Titan gods (Helios and Selene) with a group of Olympian gods (Hestia, Demeter, Dionysus et al.). They are celebrating the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus, which is right at the moment when the stable rule of the supreme god is established.[40] On the other side of the building, the west pediment, a strong parallel to the divine order scene is shown. It concerns the autochthonous order in Athens (Figure 8). The sculpture depicts the divine *eris* between Athena and Poseidon in the story of Kekrops which ends with the victory of the goddess and her affirmation of the Athenian order. The link between divine order and autochthonous order on this pediment is explicit: both the Olympian gods (Hermes and Iris) and all the generations of autochthonous Athenians (Kekrops with three daughters, Ion with his mother Creusa, the royal house of Eleusis and Praxithea) are shown as participants in this divine-human event.

The metopes continue this discourse. They also manifest a prominent interrelation between the human world and the divine world on the issue of order. There are three walls depicting the world of human beings. The Centauromachy on the south shows the victory of the civilized Athenian world over the wild world. The Amazonomachy on the west presents the triumph of Greek men over eastern exotic power, the savage women. And the Trojan War on the north displays a fulfillment of the will of the divinity when Troy was sacked by Greeks with all the Olympian gods as witnesses. Correspondingly, the last wall, the Gigantomachy on the east, depicts the cosmic battle where Zeus wins over the previous generations just before he establishes his ruling order. The four walls of metopes are parallel with each other, as if the victory of Athens over barbarians, women and foreigners can be naturally compared to the

[40] Parker (1987) 192-93. See also my discussion on the sculpture of Apollo's temple in chapter 3. All generations of gods cooperate under the order of Zeus, i.e. in the post-Zeus era.

victory of Zeus over the previous gods: this structural parallel makes Athenian social order even more comparable to the divine order.

After the observation of the historical victories and the divine story, further inside the temple, spectators could see a more complex presentation of the friezes which, as is agreed by most scholars, shows the great scene of Athenian citizenry in the Panathenaea procession in honour of Athena, the goddess who established the social principle for the city of Athens.[41] In this scene, the friezes directly integrate divine gods and human beings into the same civic space, which in effect brings the two worlds even closer. By linking the two worlds with the civic event, autochthony is again paralleled with the divine principle.

With the sculptures constructed in an integrated entity, the Parthenon temple is thus shown as a *harmonious cosmos* in which the order of human society is based on its *interaction with the divine world*. Such a coherent theological-social picture brings to light the special feature of Athenian social discourse, and autochthony is presented as one of the crucial elements within this framework, as demonstrated by the divine *eris* on the pediment and Panathenaea on the friezes.

Several steps away from the Parthenon, another main building on the Acropolis shares the same pattern that fits the myths into the larger theological system. If the Parthenon presents a grand picture for Athenian autochthony, the Erechtheum embodies more straightforwardly the idea of these myths in physical and monumental form.[42] An immediate link between autochthony and the divine world can be seen in the name and the function of the sanctuary. It is generally agreed that the Erechtheum is named after

[41] Since the 18th century, the frieze has been generally taken as representation of Athenian citizenry participating in the Panathenaea procession. See Jeppesen (1987) and (2007), Osborne (1987) and (1994a). But more recent scholars attempt to explore a new interpretation of the frieze in a mythological viewpoint. Connelly [(1996) and (2014)] is representative. She interprets the "*peplos* scene" as the story of Erechtheus and his family. Although this reading gets support from some scholars, it remains controversial. One of the major problems of Connelly's reading is that she relies too much on Euripides' dramatic fragments on the myth of Erechtheus and, except for the *peplos*, she cannot provide a convincing interpretation of other various sculptures. See Younger (1993), Harrison (1996), Carter (2011), and Pemberton (1976) 114.

[42] The earliest detailed study of the Erechtheum (Erechtheion) is by Paton et al. (1927) and Balanos (1938). In recent years, dissertations by Lesk (2004), Sourvinou-Inwood (2011) 72-73 and Clements (2015) also contribute remarkably to the interpretation of this building.

the autochthonous king Erechtheus[43] and is built as a replacement for the Old Temple to house the wooden cult statue of Athena along with some other cults.[44] The intimate association between the honour of the goddess Athena Polias and the Athenian hero recalls the mythic story of the Eleusis war in which the autochthonous Erechtheus and Athena both play crucial roles.[45] The vivid presentation of the story with two corresponding holes on the roof and the floor of the building, which indicates the work of Poseidon's trident when he killed Erechtheus in anger after his son was defeated, further shows the victory of the mortal king and the divine goddess. Through this systematic presentation, the hierarchical order of both the divine world and the human world are correspondingly displayed.

What, then, is the idea of autochthony that the construction of the Erechtheum conveys? Is it the same order as the one that we discussed in the mythic narrative? To answer this question, the objects in this building should be examined further. One prominent feature of the Erechtheum is highly relevant to our general discussion of the role of women in myths of autochthony, yet is surprisingly absent from many treatments: the maiden porch on the south side (Figure 9).[46] Standing in a very conspicuous position, it is impossible for people not to pay attention to the six maidens when they enter the Acropolis. Besides the Athena Promachus, the six maidens are the only statues that are exposed to the open air – and facing the Parthenon – which indicates their special status. Functionally speaking, the six maidens serve as columns supporting the entablature on their heads. But why are these columns constructed in the shape of maidens instead of just normal pillars? Explanations need be sought through the status of this group of statues. They are young virgins. Their long hair that falls in a loose braid indicates their virginity. The inaccessibility of the porch may also be a symbol of the protection of such untouchable virgin bodies. Together with the baskets on their heads, the role of these statues is usually regarded as either young virgin girls in the Panathenaic procession or

[43] For ancient naming the temple, see Pausanias I.26.5, Pseudo-Plutarch, *Decem Oratorum Vitae*, Lycurgus 843e.
[44] For the study of the Old Temple, see Hurwit (1999) who addresses it as "pre-Erechtheum". See also Lesk (2004) 7 and Clements (2015) 142-46.
[45] See my discussion in the first section.
[46] Regarding the identity and function of the six maidens, scholars have never reached a satisfactory agreement. On the debate, see Neils (2005) with rich bibliography.

virgins taking part in some secret rites of goddesses such as Demeter, Artemis or Athena.[47]

No matter which role the maidens stand for, one thing is at least clear: they are human virgin girls and they are present in a conspicuous position outside the building dedicated to autochthony on the Acropolis.[48] This unique construction brings to light the significance of their presentation. Being placed at the Erechtheum, they are granted a proper and visible place. In this way, the Erechtheum consists of not only males but also females. In the intricate framework of autochthony, women are thus not excluded but are included and are allocated roles in a proper manner. Furthermore, judging from the generous distance between the girls and their confident gestures, the maidens seem to be appreciating the Athenian social order. The female at the Erechtheum is possibly presented to ally itself to the male-dominated system of its own free will and is thus integrated into the entire society without irreconcilable conflicts.[49] Both the female's physically "supporting" the autochthonous building and their ritually "serving" the virgin goddess Athena imply strongly such tendency.

As with the maidens, the Pandora at the base of Athena's statue in the Parthenon temple[50] also indicates a similar rule, i.e. the integration of women into the whole social

[47] Another theory about the function of this kind of maiden could be found in the Roman architect Vitruvius' account of them using the Latin form *caryatides*. He stated in his 1st century BCE work *De architectura* (I.1.5) that these female figures represented the punishment of the women of Karyae, a city near Sparta, who were condemned to slavery after betraying Athens. However, Vitruvius' explanation is doubtful. On the one hand, as Hersey [(1988) 69] points out, before the Persian war, the female figures had already been used as a decorative support; on the other hand, the event in the Persian war might have been too remote for the contemporary architects to develop into a theme for construction.

[48] Kontoleon (1949) and Scholl (1995 and 1998) suggest that the six maidens are symbolic markers which incorporated the tomb of Kekrops.

[49] It is now also clear that the object carried in the hands of the *korai* are *phialai*, which indicates that they are making libations as witnesses to the presentation of Erichthonius. This also indicates strongly they are firmly embedded within the established social system. For the discussion of the gesture, see Lest (2004) 24, 106, and Clements (2015) 172-74.

[50] The base of this colossal statue was set at eye-level, with images of myth carved in marble relief. Pausanias (1. 24. 7) recognizes that the myth on the base of the statue represented the birth of Pandora. Pausanias quickly linked this image to Hesiod's first woman. Although Pliny gives another interpretation of this sculpture, suggesting that it is about the birth of twenty gods (Pliny, *Natural History* 36.18), most scholars reject this suggestion. See, for example, Osborne [1994] 87. For a different observation of the figure Pandora, see Hurwit (1995).

system rather than an exclusion of this race as suggested by Loraux.[51] It is necessary for us to bear in mind that Pandora in the Parthenon is not presented in isolation but rather is placed in the entire cosmic world constructed within the building. The presence of this first woman at the Acropolis is itself a sign that the female, at any rate, occupies a space in the ordered world along with the male. The only question is where the place for women is. Being carved as an affiliated decoration on the base, the first woman, as originally narrated in Hesiod, is now placed right *under* Athena. Her presence is for the glorious victory of the virgin goddess. Above her is the divine world under the rule of Zeus and the human world guided by the order of autochthony. In this structure, this Pandora is likely to be no longer an evil being, as presented in the archaic period, but a follower of Athena here in classical Athens. In the new context, this figure, who represents the race of women, is not only integrated into the entire world to which Athena belongs but is also depicted as a submissive figure under the care of the virgin goddess as well as Zeus.[52] It is, therefore, hard for us to regard this Pandora as an anti-Athena, as suggested by some scholars.[53] She has entered into the harmonious cosmic world; has been placed in the very centre of the temple; has witnessed the establishment of the autochthonous order and has confirmed – even celebrated – the victory of the goddess. Now this female, the first woman of the human world, shares the same order with Athena and shows the appropriate place to which a woman should be assigned in the sexual world.

The Acropolis is certainly far more rich than we have shown in this short section. However, for our current purposes, it is sufficient for us to pause here. As we have seen, the Acropolis offers structurally a comprehensive cosmic picture for spectators to observe the myths of autochthony. In the Parthenon temple, autochthony is shown to be co-operated into the interaction between the human world and the divine world. The

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[51] Loraux (1993) chapter 2. At the same time, the six maidens are also compared systematically with figures on the lower-relief Parthenon frieze by Scholl [(1998) 33-34], which also suggests the inclusion of women in the holistic system.

[52] Osborne [(1994b) 87] points out the positive connection between Athena, Pandora and autochthony: "the worshipper coming from the east and entering the temple was presented with three parallel scenes in turn: the gods are seen to observe first the birth of Athena from Zeus; then the arrival of the autochthonous Athenian worshippers; and finally the birth of Pandora fashioned from clay."

[53] Hurwit (1995) 184: "She is no gift and no gift-giver, but a punishment, a trap […] If Pandora is παρθένος, it is in the sense that she is a maiden ready for marriage – 'sexually available', one who has not yet lost her virginity – which, of course, Athena Parthenos is not." Cf. Loraux (2000) 7.

three corresponding parts of the temple indicate a common order that human society shares with the world of gods in the same cosmos. This order is the order of Zeus which is defended by the goddess Athena Polias and is further applied to and imitated by Athenian society. Through assigning the female figures (maidens and Pandora) an appropriate place in the sexual world, both the Erechtheum and the Parthenon temple indicate a well-established order. Just as with the presence of the Titan gods at the birth scene of Athena, the existence of the inferior figures Poseidon, Hephaestus and Kekrops' daughters at the Erechtheum implies further an affirmation of the victory of both Zeus' rule and the autochthonous city. In a glorious presentation, the Acropolis speaks to the world.

III. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the civic idea of the myths of autochthony. I have argued that autochthony as a series of social discourses in classical Athens, either by way of telling myths or by material construction, attempts to form a new mythic imagination concerning an ideal social order for the human world. By proposing a viable scheme for the establishment of a new order, autochthony alters the archaic tragic view about the human world. Narrated in a theological framework, the scheme of "the male suppressing the female and the female subordinating itself to the male" is shown to be in accord with the monistic rule of Zeus, which in effect is an imitation of the divine order. By re-establishing the relationship between the divine world and the human world, autochthony introduces a new mythic thinking about social order to the city of Athens in its classical period.

This reading of autochthony is proposed with a reflection on the dominant theory regarding the myths as a representation of political ideology for democratic Athens. The continual integration of the female into social community suggests an inclusion rather than an exclusion of women in mythic narrative. Therefore, the idea of mythic autochthony is first and foremost for the entire sexual society instead of for a specific politics where females are supposed to be absent. Furthermore, with deep concerns about those ontological issues such as divinity and humanity, being and subjectivity, autochthony is set in an even grander framework where not only human society but also the entire universe is activated for its imagination.

The rich meaning of autochthony at multiple levels allows us to see how wide and deep the thought of Athenian autochthony can go, which has certainly reached far beyond the boundary of political or even social concern. The central question that has been asked throughout all the representations of the myths – how to properly deal with conflicts and establish a stable social order in a human *polis* – not only connects autochthony to various issues such as order and disorder, monist and dualist, sex and sexuality, virtue and morality as well as justice and justification, but also encourages intellectuals to further reflect on these issues. Questions derived from autochthony can be profound: how do we – both men and women – identify ourselves? How should we treat our relationship with others? How should we position ourselves in the cosmos? And how to establish a good order and justice for the world in which we are living? What really makes autochthony vigorous in Athens is such a potential profundity and intricacy which is indicated repeatedly in its mythic narratives.

We may say that autochthony as a charter myth in the civic sphere gained the authority of social principle, but it does not mean that this newly invented discourse had been formed and fixed once and for all. In the realm of intellectuals, somewhere in Athenian society, autochthony became an object of debate. With those profound issues in mind, intellectuals discussed, questioned, and challenged the feasibility and validity of this construction – however successful it might seem. In the next two chapters, we will turn to those debates and look at how autochthony serves as a common ground not only for popular mythic imagination in major traditions but also for vigorous exchange by sophisticated minds. These contemporary reflections formed a rich dialogue with the civic discourse and through composing and recomposing the mythic narrative, they not only responded to the civic autochthony but also developed their own ideas concerning the order of human society. I have chosen two important fields, tragedy and philosophy, for our case study. Both of them, as we will see, by keeping a distance from the civic sphere, carefully re-considered the newly invented discourse and once again demonstrate the power of myth as a field of conversation.

Chapter 3
Pathology of Autochthony: Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Ion*

Even though it is debatable to what extent tragedy as a kind of public performance can make its average audience question their own city, the intellectualized characterisation of tragedy is at any rate hard to deny. With complex writing, which combines irony, didacticism and questioning all in one narrative, tragic plays have indeed, as has been argued by many scholars, gone out of the comfort zone of merely praising the city towards distancing themselves from contemporary society, and offering an engaging place for self-examination among Athens' citizens.[1] This chapter does not intend to go so far as to discuss the intellectual or emotional reception of tragedy from the aspect of audience, which can also be a great standpoint for looking at how mutation of myth engenders exchange of ideas with multiple voices, but will focus more restrictively on the perspective of play writers, those intellectuals who possess greater self-consciousness of self-critique in composition, and investigate how tragedians, through staging the mythic theme of autochthony in the Athenian theatre, make a conscious response to other parts of Athenian society concerning social order and social justice.

I have chosen two plays as a case study: Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Ion*. They both serve as good examples of tragedy in conversation. As we will see, in revising the traditional discourse of autochthony, both of the writers interweave their own thoughts into the tragic narrative and thereby shed new light on this popular mythic thinking in the genre of tragedy. In our reading of these texts, therefore, it would be especially interesting to see the mechanism of conversation between tragedy and civic discourse. We should ask: what is changed and what remains? Why are specific plots or details chosen to be stressed or neglected? How do those changes affect the entire understanding and presentation of one myth? And how does such a manipulation of writing ultimately work for an intellectually sophisticated end? And from here, we can take one step further. I have chosen to discuss two plays because, with the two narratives presented together, we are actually looking at a more complex picture. When we move

[1] It would be quite hard now to find in current scholarship any reading which proposes a simple statement about tragedy and deny entirely the critical thinking of this genre. But for the debate about the function of tragedy, see especially the debate between Griffin (1998) and Goldhill (2000), cf. Heath (1987), Sourvinou-Inwood (2003), Goldhill (1990), (1997), Loraux (1986).

our eyes from the comparison between two genres to two authors within one genre, we will see that the two plays, although being similar in the form of tragedy, take rather different strategies to stage autochthony. In terms of presentation, Aeschylus appears to be more conservative. He still follows closely the traditional narrative but makes the most use of it. In comparison, Euripides is certainly more adventurous, as we will see that he stages an entirely new story, which allows a greater space for his manipulation and reflection. Such a difference between the two plays is understandable in the context of theatrical *agôn*, which is likely to be a result of authors competing for the authority of mythic interpretation and civic education. In this sense, plays are not only in conversation with other genres but are also in debate with one another within the genre over questions how far a revision and response could and should go and what kind of reflections could be put before Athenian citizens.

As the theme of the thesis is social order in mythic thinking, we will, again, focus on this issue in this chapter. Our reading of the plays will look at their reflections on social order and more specifically gender order. We will try to understand how the traditional thought of autochthony is used, reflected, questioned, challenged or even criticised by the writing of tragedy. In the following sections, we will firstly look at how autochthony is performed on stage, and then investigate how such staging shows a conversation between tragedy and civic discourse. Now let us turn to our first play: the *Oresteia*. Since Aeschylus follows closely traditional narrative in composing Agamemnon's family story, it is imperative for us to firstly look at how the tragedian frames autochthony, and then investigate how, with such a narrative framework, Aeschylus shows a critical understanding of this popular myth.

I. The *Oresteia*: Order, *Dikē* and the Charter for the City

Indeed, even with a casual glance, we can see that the *Oresteia* appears to present autochthony elaboratedly in the play. There is an apparently happy ending in the tragedy where the familial vengeance and endless bloodshed are eventually put to an end in the city of Athens.[2] The final victory of the goddess Athena Polias in the court trial at the Athenian Areopagus not only makes the entire play Athens-oriented but also allows

[2] On the theme of the *Oresteia* concerning Athens, see for example Goldhill (1984a) and (1992), MacLeod (1982), Griffith (1995), Collard (2003), Dodds (1960).

traditionally mainstream scholars to address this trilogy with a glorious title: "a charter for the city". And because Orestes was eventually released thanks to the judgement in the law court, this "charter" is thus thought to be a replacement of an archaic concept of *dikē* based on reciprocal vengeance by the civilization of the *polis* according to the rationality of its juridical institution.[3]

Although such a traditional reading is not unquestionable (to which I will come back later), in terms of its analysis of the happy ending and the founding of the patriarchal principle, it nevertheless allows us to see a clear parallel between the dramatic performance and the mythic telling of autochthony – the other "charter for the city". Indeed, not only does the contrast between the old and new institutions of justice in the play mark the change of thought from the archaic to classical period which is shown explicitly in autochthony, but also, as we will see, the plot of the tragedy *per se* follows closely the narrative pattern of the autochthonous myth so that the trilogy becomes an excellent re-presentation of this civic discourse.

If we look at the structure of the *Oresteia*, we will see how the narrative of the autochthonous myth is interwoven into the family story of Agamemnon: (1) after the Trojan War, Agamemnon went back home, but waiting for him was his murder. Clytemnestra, his wife, killed him because he sacrificed their daughter Iphigeneia. The family fell apart: men and women stood against one another. Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, commanded by Apollo, returned to Argos to avenge his mother since she killed his father. But this killing triggered again another round of vengeance by the Erinyes, a chorus of goddesses born in the pre-Zeus era who accused Orestes of killing his mother. (2) The endless reversal of vengeance finally leads to a solution in Athens. To settle the dispute, Athena set up a trial for Orestes in the Athenian court of the Areopagus, where Athenian male citizens made their judgment. (3) With an

[3] On classical statements about "charter myth" of the *Oresteia*, see Finley (1955) 246, Kitto (1961) 64, Macleod (1982) 124, Sommerstein (1989), Heath (1987), see also Sailor and Stroup (1999), Dodds (1960), Van den Berge and Caspers (2015). This classical reading is further confirmed in a transformed way by Marxist and feminist scholars who also agree that the theme of the *Oresteia* is about an evolution or transition from archaic order to the order of legal justice, although they reject to take this justice as a universal principle but a triumph of both state and patriarchal authority. On Marxist readings, see Thomson (1946), Rose (1992). And on feminist readings, see for example Zeitlin (1978). See also Bachofen and Bamberger's reading with an anthropological approach. Bachofen (1967), Bamberger (1974) 267.

additional vote of Athena in support of the superiority of the male over the female, Apollo and Orestes won the lawsuit and the son's vengeance of the mother for his father was eventually justified. (4) However, this result did not at first sit well with the Erinyes who were defeated. Only after the threat and persuasion by Athena was the anger of these old goddesses finally appeased, and they accepted Athena's patriarchal order. From then on, the Erinyes changed their names to Eumenides, meaning "the kindly ones", and forever dwelt in Athens. (1) Starts with a disorder and sexual opposition, and (2) ends with a resolution by the goddess Athena Polias also by a crucial vote, (3) a blessed order of society is established: on the one hand, the male suppresses the female, and (4) on the other hand, the female plays a submissive role willingly in the sexual society. This is a rather straightforward parallel to the common pattern shared by all autochthonous myths, and the order established in the play, as we can see, is precisely the autochthonous order that has been repeatedly discussed in the previous chapter.[4]

One famous claim by Athena Polias in the trilogy even more directly shows the close link between Aeschylus' writing and the traditional autochthony on the mythopoetic logic of the entire play.[5] When Athena made her judgement on the case of Orestes, she announced (Aes. *Eum*. 736-40):

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[4] See my discussion in chapter 2 section 1.

[5] Aeschylus' use of myth has been excellently discussed by Zeitlin (1978) who offered a new reading by bringing us to another domain of the play that has rarely been paid attention to before her: myth-making and mythopoesis. For Zeitlin, Aeschylus' intention is not to display the solution by civic law but to invent his own solution to sexual conflicts with his new myth through "incorporating other myths and mythic elements into a comprehensive frame of reference" (p. 149). By doing so, the *Oresteia* demonstrates a transition from the myth of matriarchy to myth of patriarchy as a kind of resolution which places "Olympian over chthonic on the divine level, Greek over barbarian on the cultural level and male over female on the social level" (pp.173-74). Although Zeitlin's feminist interpretation could be re-examined, her interpretation of the myths in the play is illuminating in many ways and her substantial reading of the *Oresteia* through Greek mythic thought offers us a comprehensive picture of the mythic world in display, which is beyond a pure scope of civic law. While sharing most of Zeitlin's arguments that the *Oresteia* displays a triumph of patriarchal order, I would like to propose a different view from Zeitlin's understanding of Aeschylus' overall use of myth, which also leads to my different reading of the play's ending. Instead of regarding Aeschylus as an innovator of myth-making, I will argue below that actually the mythic setting of Aeschylus is rather conventional. He did not invent a new myth in order to resolve tragic tensions. Instead, with many mythic elements that had already been embedded in the contemporary Athenians mythological system, Aeschylus staged structurally and thematically the most popular mythic imagination on the establishment of social order in classical Athens. This imagination is exactly what we have been talking about: the order of autochthony.

μήτηρ γὰρ οὔτις ἐστὶν ἥ μ᾽ ἐγείνατο,
τὸ δ᾽ ἄρσεν αἰνῶ πάντα, πλὴν γάμου τυχεῖν,
ἅπαντι θυμῶι, κάρτα δ᾽ εἰμὶ τοῦ πατρός.
οὕτω γυναικὸς οὐ προτιμήσω μόρον
ἄνδρα κτανούσης δωμάτων ἐπίσκοπον.

For not from my mother was I born,
I praise everything that is masculine, except for the happenstance of marriage,
with every fibre of my being, I am indeed of my father.
Therefore, I will not put greater stock in the death of a woman
who killed a man, the master of the house.

Athena's siding with the male during the vote echoes strongly with the most crucial turning point in the myth of Kekrops, where it is also this goddess who, after the civic vote, announces her support of the male party in her final establishment of social order. Oriented by this divine resolution, the central concern of autochthony dominates the stage throughout the trilogy. With the intervention of Athena, the ending of the tragedy shows the same hope to human society: no matter how chaotic the human world is, if one is to follow the instruction of Athena and imitate the divine order, social order could finally be established.

Through adopting both the narrative structure and the thematic concern of the civic myths, Aeschylus makes the story of Agamemnon different from Homer's version, placing it in a new context with new meanings. In this framework, the killing of Agamemnon, along with the revenge of Orestes, is no longer merely a story about the fate of the heroes, but the darkness before dawn, a preparation for the establishment of social order, a contrast to the new world of human beings that people in classical Athens would imagine. The family of Agamemnon now becomes a parallel to the family of Athenian autochthony and the Mycenae story becomes an Athenian legend. Through performing the popular ancient myth in a spirit of autochthony, the *Oresteia* shows a great moment of the city when a promising social order could be established with a mythic scheme.

The next question is: how does Aeschylus show his reflective thinking in such a display of the civic myth? In the following section, I will try to argue that Aeschylus takes

a rather complicated strategy: instead of composing a new story, like Euripides' play, he manipulates many crucial details of the popular autochthony narrative and thereby forms an essentially different presentation of the myth. With this differentiation, the play not only attempts to reveal the problems of autochthony but also makes a great effort to encourage its audience to rethink carefully this mythic thought that is way too familiar to them.

At this point, I would like to firstly draw readers' attention to the complex ending of the play, where a big difference has been achieved. In this ending, we will see that one crucial point has been strategically added and thereby the revised autochthony becomes different from the traditional story. This element is the issue of *dikē*, one of the most crucial thematic focuses of the play.

Now I will explain why this issue of *dikē* helps so much to support Aeschylus' reworking of autochthony. Goldhill's criticism of the traditional interpretation (evolutionary theory) is a good start for our reading. In his analysis of the language of *dikē*, he touches on a very important issue of the ending: in such a text which shows an "obsessive thematic focus on the logic of justice",[6] the simply evolutionary way of reading – "whether towards 'social justice' or 'power for the few masked as social justice'"[7] – would meet a difficulty of interpretation especially when we consider that the tensions of the *Oresteia* did not really get an ultimate release until the very end of the play. Indeed, even after the trial, when the matricide of Orestes was justified by the civic vote at the Areopagus, the Erinyes, those ancient goddesses, were still angry about the victory of men and they still threatened to take a revenge. It was not until the persuasion and threat of Athena that this power of rebellion was finally resolved. Therefore, it is the forced action of Athena instead of the original principle of *dikē* that finally ends those tragic tensions.

Goldhill is certainly right to point out that to claim a historical triumph of reasoned law of *dikē* is too simplified a theory, and his reading, especially his note on Athena's intervention, prepares for us a good way to look at the intricate issue of the autochthonous ending. As we have argued above, in the parallel between the tragedy and the myth, Athena's intervention correlated so closely with the establishment of autochthonous order that this scene is essentially a representation of the final scene of

[6] Goldhill (2000) 41.
[7] Goldhill (1992) 33.

the autochthonous story. Now if the discourse of autochthony is taken into Goldhill's reading, we can in fact develop a more provocative view: it is the order of autochthony instead of law of *dikē* that finally stopped all the social conflicts. In other words: the ending of the *Oresteia* is in essence a combination of a failure of *dikē* and a victory of autochthony.

A failure *and* a victory: how should we understand such a paradoxical combination? Now the complexity of the ending becomes evident. At first glance, we may still interpret it in a positive way (a transformed traditional theory), which would confirm the great value of autochthony as indicated by the structure of the play itself. We can say that whereas the issue of the competing obligations of *dikē* is still unresolved at the end of the trilogy, one goal has at least been reached: society is restored to an orderly state and now normal social life could move on. Ending with a tone of blessing, the play indeed manifests a "charter for the city", a great achievement of the mythic scheme. However, if we were to think about the relation between *dikē* and the autochthonous order carefully, we may become more worried about this ending: if *dikē*, be it called social justice or legal justice, remains problematic until the end of the story, how are we to make sense of such a glorious establishment of the autochthonous order? Is not the latter supposed to be naturally just, if it is the fundamental principle for the entire society?

With this unusual combination of the failure of *dikē* and the victory of autochthony, the ending of the *Oresteia* seems to have opened up a great space for dramatic interpretation, which may allow both positive and negative readings. But soon we may come to realize that actually the positive reading does not really exist, since no matter how glorious the victory can be, there is always an implicit *inconsistency* between social justice (*dikē*) and social order (autochthony),[8] which makes the victory of the latter not only unsatisfactory but increasingly questionable. As we can imagine, the more powerful

[8] In this section, my reference to "order" is mostly autochthonous order or the like, for example, the patriarchal order that originally existed in Agamemnon's palace in the play. To some extent, in the *Oresteia*, the order in the time of Agamemnon before the transgression of Clytemnestra is similar to Athenian autochthony, i.e. the male dominates the female and the female should be submissive to the male, and the entire trilogy presents how the patriarchal order is violated in human society but then rebuilt in a stronger way. In regard to the term *dikē*, I take the reading of Goldhill (1992) that it is very complicated in meaning and, even in the single translation "justice", the meaning can also be very rich. But it is exactly because of this complexity that the discrepancy between *dikē* and order appears.

and forceful the construction of autochthonous order in human society is, the larger the gap between *dikē* and social order can be. As a result, any praise of autochthony in the play becomes a questioning of such a praise.

Here we see a crucial point in Aeschylus' writing, which we did not encounter in the civic narrative. In the traditional myths there is only one focused concern, that is, social order – and thereby a tacit consent to the *equalization* of social order to social justice –; in Aeschylus' tragedy, however, order and justice are shown to be no longer naturally synchronized with one another. With the introduction of *dikē* as a distinct counterpart of order, the presentation of autochthony in the tragedy becomes different. As we will see, it is precisely with this sharp point that Aeschylus makes a response to the civic autochthony and pushes its audience to think really hard about the relationship between autochthonous order and social justice.

Now that the nature of autochthony is revealed to be much more complex than what has been presented in traditional discourse, the entire way of perceiving this mythic thinking should be reconsidered. With the manifestation of the uncomfortable gap, Aeschylus is in essence questioning whether the establishment of autochthonous order is really equivalent to the achievement of *dikē*. Or to put it more simply: whether autochthonous order is really unquestionably just? This question immediately posits autochthony in a challenged situation and invites its audience to consider this issue carefully.

In fact, the complex relation between (dis)order and justice that is shown in the final scene has long been presented as a prominent issue from the beginning of the trilogy. The story starts with such a paradoxical situation: a crisis of order but a search for justice. The best representative is Clytemnestra. As we can see, in her first appearance on stage, Clytemnestra is already shown to be a violator of social order: she is a powerful feminine figure rising up against the male's authority, and then she conducted a killing of her man.[9] But as soon as such a crime happened, Clytemnestra claimed a justification for all of her actions. The queen said that it was the death of Iphigeneia that triggered her to take

[9] Zeitlin (1978) 150. However, to argue that society under the rule of Clytemnestra is straightforwardly a matriarchal society is risky, as this is not a normal society after all, but rather a transgressive and abnormal rule which is well perceived by all the characters in the play. See also the criticism by Foley (2009) on Zeitlin's application of Bamberger's "myths of matriarchy" to the *Oresteia*.

revenge on Agamemnon (*Aga*. 1523-28).[10] Here the *highlight* of Iphigeneia's death expresses a logic of justice for Clytemnestra's violation of the order: since it is Agamemnon who originally did wrong to his family, Clytemnestra's killing of her husband, i.e. violating order, could claim to be a just action against his injustice.[11]

Although other reasons for the king's death were also mentioned briefly in the play, such as Clytemnestra's extramarital affair and Aegisthus' own family history, which makes the woman's self-justification more questionable, it is still interesting to see that Clytemnestra, the very figure who transgresses order, is claimed to be a defender of justice. It seems that the realization of justice must be accompanied by a violation of order. Indeed, as we can see from what Goldhill calls the "revenge and reversal"[12] pattern in the *Oresteia*, not only Clytemnestra, but also Orestes and the Erinyes, in order to perform their justice (which seem less problematic than the case of Clytemnestra), all have no choice but to go further into the vicious cycle of chaos. Compared to the traditional narrative where social conflicts could be resolved once and for all, in such a lengthy cycle of "justice and disorder", we see a much more irritating and desperate situation: it seems that no matter how hard *dikē* is sought, the order of society is never made better but worse.[13]

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[10] *Aga*. 1523-28: οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτος δολίαν ἄτην οἴκοισιν ἔθηκ'; [...] ἄξια δράσας ἄξια πάσχων "for did not this man set calamity in the house through deception? [...] Having done what is due, he now suffers what is due." Cf. 1521-30. It is also noticeable that right at the beginning of the play, in the first extremely long chorus song (*Aga*. 40-257), Agamemnon's sacrifice has already been presented as the core event in the narrative, which directs the entire cause and effect plot line of Clytemnestra's revenge to the death of Iphigenia.

[11] Agamemnon is not a moral model. The sacrifice of his daughter is shown to be rather morally problematic in the play, as has been discussed by many scholars. On the ethical choice of the virgin sacrifice, see Dodds (1990), Fisher (1992) 283-86, Gantz (1982), Hammond (1965), Nussbaum (1986), Peradotto (1969), Rosenmeyer (1982), Lloyd-Jones (1962), Winnington-Ingram (1948).

[12] Goldhill (1992) 24. See also Gewirtz (1987), Saxonhous (1986), Euben (1982), Janko (1980), Vellacott (1977).

[13] For some scholars, such an endless cycle of "revenge and reversal" can be explained by the "competing obligations of *dikē*" in ancient system of justice "where the very act of taking revenge repeatedly turns the revenger into an object of revenge", and therefore they take the juridical process in the Athenian court Areopagus as a new attempt of ending such a cycle. See Goldhill (1984), (1986), (1992), cf. Clark and Csapo (1991). See also Roth (1993), Wofford (2017), Foley (1997). However, as we have argued above, although the pattern of "revenge and reversal" is indeed put to an end by the system of law, the existing social conflicts were still not eliminated as expected. Still, when *dikē* is sought, a new turn of turbulence is ready to go. In this sense, the theory of "revenge and

One might argue that, after the third cycle of "revenge and reversal", a desirable social order has indeed been established. Yes, this is true. But to what extent there is a compromise of justice for the sake of establishing or maintaining order is another issue. If we look back at how the chorus reacted to Clytemnestra's self-justification, we can see that, even at so early a stage, the play has already prepared for its uneasy ending of an autochthonous victory.

We have mentioned that the revenge of Clytemnestra was claimed to be an act of and for justice. And, besides the woman herself, the chorus also acknowledged her reasonable fury in relation to *dikē*.[14] However, no matter to what extent Clytemnestra's killing could be justified, one charge against her has never changed: it is this woman[15] – not the man – who was the very initiator of the entire tragic *chaos*. Very interestingly, on the issue of Iphigeneia where *dikē* is supposed to be discussed mostly prominently, this language seems to have fallen entirely out of the chorus' major concern. They do not mention the problematic sacrifice any more but only focus on the woman's violation of the original order.

As Foley sharply points out, the chorus has less interest in the real justice of the actions than the situation of disorder: "Curiously enough, what we see if we look closely at this scene, is that the chorus has far less interest in Clytemnestra's own justifications for her crime than in expressing despair at the humiliating mode of death Agamemnon

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reversal" reaches its limit and cannot explain why even without the very act *per se*, the cycle of "revenge and reversal" is still not really out of our sight. Therefore, I would like to argue that, by going back to our previous investigation, a more fundamental cause for the lengthy cycle of "revenge and reversal" is in effect not the act of revenge itself, but the unpleasant inconsistency – the gap – between order and justice.

[14] They do find the justice is problematic in her case: 1561 (δύσμαχα δ᾽ ἐστὶ κρῖναι). See Foley [(2009) 227]'s discussion. Also, Winnington-Ingram (1948): Agamemnon's death was "not undeserved", because he had insulted Clytemnestra in her status a wife.

[15] For some scholars, Clytemnestra's masculine factors may make her more like a man rather than a woman. Clytemnestra's masculine features: *Aga*. 258-60, 351, 371-19 (language); 614, (*kratos*), 1673 (ruling), 1231 ("a masculine murder"). On the masculine features of Clytemnestra in her rule, see Goldhill (1984a), Goldhill (1984b) 85-91, Foley [(2009) 208-10], Betensky (1978), McClure (1996) and (1997), Winnington-Ingram (1948). However, to regard the queen as the one with a transcendent gender can be problematic since Clytemnestra never identifies herself as a masculine figure; instead, she always refers herself as a woman, a mother and a wife. See Clytemnestra as a wife: *Aga*. 601-606, 855-860, 861, 1498, 1519, *Choe*. 1005-06. Clytemnestra as a mother *Choe*. 90, 133, 139, 419, 430, 877, 896, 899, 909-927. See Chesi (2014)'s discussion with a rich bibliography.

has received from his wife/a woman and the related problem of mourning him properly."[16] Indeed, what the chorus is more concerned about is how to maintain a good order for a long time: καὶ τὸ μὲν καλῶς ἔχον/ ὅπως χρονίζον εὖ μενεῖ βουλευτέον (*Aga*. 846-47: We must consider how goodness will remain well for a long time).[17] And according to the chorus, their well-established order cannot last long precisely because Agamemnon has "an evil wife"[18]: Clytemnestra breaks social rules that she, as a good wife, is *not supposed* to break. It seems that, here, the ambiguity of *dikē* in Agamemnon's deeds becomes much less important – it can even be forgotten.

In the patriarchal society, the chorus' expectation of Clytemnestra to be a good wife may well remind its audience of another woman, Praxithea, who shares a similar fate with the former but who acts entirely in a reversed way. As we have seen in the last chapter, when her daughter also needed to be sacrificed for the sake of her husband, what Praxithea did is to support Erechtheus' sacrifice immediately without any mentioning of the issue of justice. Such a voluntary action not only forms an explicit contrast against Clytemnestra's revenge but also leads to an entirely different outcome: instead of stirring up further disorder, Erechtheus and Praxithea won the war together and defended the peace of their society. If social order (and here autochthonous order) is what is more expected, we would be able to understand why Praxithea is shown to be an admirable woman while Clytemnestra is the most negative figure of all.

In terms of keeping order, Clytemnestra is even less acceptable than her daughter Iphigeneia, who also has attempted to disobey the male. We may still remember how the chorus narrates the scene of Iphigeneia's sacrifice: she did not want to be sacrificed. She cried so loudly that her father had to seal her mouth to restrain her speech (Aga. 228-237). But at any rate, she, the weak girl, was suppressed violently by the mighty father in the end and thus a real disorder did not happen. Everything is still under control. While in Clytemnestra's case, however, the situation is different: she is so strong and cunning that the revolt did succeed. If, for the chorus, Iphigeneia the weak is still to some degree pitiful because she did not fundamentally violate the established order after all, Clytemnestra, by contrast, seems much more annoying because she has already caused

[16] Foley (2009) 227.
[17] Cf. *Aga*. 854: νίκη δ' ἐπείπερ ἔσπετ', ἐμπέδως μένοι; 1337: θεοτίμητος δ' οἴκαδ' ἱκάνει.
[18] *Aga*. 1319. Sommerstein's translation: the chorus describes Agamemnon as ἀνήρ τε δυσδάμαρτος "ill-wedded". Sommerstein (2008).

unnecessary conflict. Without this "evil wife", this strong *anti-male* and *anti-order,* disorder could have been avoided, let alone a further dispute over *dikē* by the two divided parties. If only Clytemnestra could be a good wife like Praxithea, or even a weak woman like Iphigeneia!

There may be one moment when the audience, after witnessing the tragic death of Agamemnon, hopes to summon their heroine Praxithea or the sacrificed Iphigeneia back onto the stage: if Clytemnestra had been a "good wife" or a submissive woman to maintain the established order, the fate of the entire family might have been decisively changed. However, the more such an idea of autochthony is called for, the more worrying the play becomes. We will need to remember that although the chorus blamed the woman for disobeying order, it is also the same group of men who admitted that Clytemnestra's action was to some extent justifiable. Now think about the silence of justice in the glorious deeds of Praxithea! Think about the quietness of Iphigeneia! It seems that a female's submission to male order is not always unproblematic,[19] and if one is to take the defence of social order as the primary commitment, the *dikē* of such an order would have to be a secondary concern. The gap between order and justice is wide enough without resolution.

With both the endless cycle of "justice and disorder" and the very complex attitudes towards Clytemnestra's deeds, we can say that, at least in Aeschylus' work, justice and order are almost matters of either-or, which are so hard to be realized both concurrently and losslessly. This is the most crucial challenge that the tragedian makes against the civic thinking of autochthony: although it can still be admirable in terms of its model of social order, the issue of justice in its thinking is just too slippery to be thought through carefully. Through presenting the difficulty of this mythic thought on stage, the tragedy forces its audience to face its problem directly. But we should still ask: is there really no way of bridging the gap between social order and social justice at all?

Aeschylus' answer to this question seems to be quite negative: although throughout the trilogy, the establishment of social order (i.e. patriarchal/ autochthonous order) and the pursuit of social justice are always intertwined with one another, they

[19] It is worth comparing the different treatments of Iphigeneia in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, where the latter Iphigeneia is presented as a heroine-like girl who offers to sacrifice herself willingly. The version of Euripides could surely arose a more uncomfortable feeling of audience since the lively life of a girl is just ended by her self-willed killing. But both authors have actually recognized the problematic and even horrible side of female submission to the patriarchal system.

seem to have never reached a real sense of consistency nor relief. We have seen the case of Clytemnestra, seen the "revenge and reversal" in the next two rounds and also seen the failure of the new mode of juridical judgement: none of them has really effectively put an end to the social conflicts and found a good solution that could be accepted by all parties in one society. Why is there always such a gap? In order to understand this negative vision of Aeschylus, it is imperative for us to return to his tragic writing. I will argue that, for Aeschylus, the gap necessarily exists because this is the very *nature* of human society.

We have seen that from the previous chapters, in Greek minds human nature is closely linked to sexuality in human society, now we will see that this is again to where the tragedian traces his reflection back. For Aeschylus, the unbridgeable gap between autochthonous order and social justice is in essence rooted in the gender issue of human world. As pointed out by many readings, right at the beginning of the first play *Agamemnon*, sexual conflict has been manifested explicitly in the dramatic presentation of the protagonist Clytemnestra, and throughout the play, at almost every crucial point, this dualist opposition between men and women can be seen.[20] But besides this emphatic display of tragic sexuality that has been noticed by many scholars, I will add one more point to it: such a fierce sexual opposition appears to be more fundamental in Aeschylus' play, since, as we will see, it is presented as not an external but an intrinsic and ontological conflict within human society.

The highlight of the death of Iphigeneia is again a good example. The mother's stress on *her daughter*'s death shows explicitly that her intention is to claim the same status equal to the father. Since the mother shares the same *responsibility* and *right* of procreation as *one* of the *two* parents, the female holds naturally an identical subjectivity as the male, and, by nature of sexual procreation, women are ontologically equal to men. "Birth from the two": this is a *natural justice* to which women as mothers would necessarily appeal. Such an equalization of gender in the natural pattern of sexual procreation certainly goes against the constructed patriarchal or monistic order where women are forcedly dominated by men. Therefore, when natural justice is sought, in the case of Clytemnestra, the constructed order is unavoidably violated. And in turn, when an

[20] The dramatic climax in the *Agamemnon*, for example, fixes the audience's eyes at the fierce moment of Agamemnon's death and the words describing this event precisely relate to such sexual conflict: θῆλυς ἄρσενος φονεὺς/ ἔστιν (*Aga*. 1231-2: the female is the slayer of the male). On the male-female conflict, see especially Zeitlin (1978), Gagarin (1976) 87-110, and Winnington-Ingram 1983 (101-31), Goldhill (1992) ch.7.

attempt at maintaining or resuming the constructed order is made, its effort may also encounter impediment or even challenge concerning its justification, as in the case of Orestes.

Such an uneasy tension between the naturally dualistic opposition and an attempt to establish the monistic patriarchal order shows how complex and problematic the relationship between autochthonous order and natural justice can be. Although it is rather ambiguous which of the two values, the natural justice or the constructed order (cultural justice), is more admired by Aeschylus, what we see clearly in his play is that the contradiction between them leads to a destruction of order and a continual split in society.

With the development of the play, the division between the two sexes as two equal subjects becomes increasingly distinct and even the generational division between mother and son is quickly replaced by sexual opposition between men and women. Orestes, for example, does not kill Clytemnestra for himself; the deed is entirely for the sake of his father. He makes a great effort to grow up from puberty to adulthood by separating himself from his attachment to his mother, and thereby judges Clytemnestra as a wife and a woman (*Eum*. 625-27).[21] The ontological opposition between women and men, along with the constant inconsistency between social justice and social order, dominates the centre of the stage,[22] and it becomes so sharp that, at the dramatic climax of the entire trilogy, the most intense conflict between two genders breaks out: a divine quarrel between the male god Apollo and female goddesses Erinyes (*Eum*. 580-1031).[23]

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[21] Zeitlin (1978) 162.

[22] The terms "mother" and "father" are intensively used by Orestes and Electra. Orestes stands firmly with the father: *Choe*. 3-8. Woman vs. father: *Choe.* 253: πατροστερῆ γόνον; 255-56: τοῦ θυτῆρος καί σε τιμῶντος μέγα/ πατρὸς; 315: ὦ πάτερ αἰνόπατερ; See also *Choe*. 345, 435, 481, 491-95, 974. Orestes struggled about his matricide: *Choe.* 899 τί δράσω; μητέρ᾽ αἰδεσθῶ κτανεῖν, cf. 1027, 1054, 909-927. Electra's confusion about the use of the term "mother": 87-105, 90, 133, 139. She also admits the authority of the father: 147-8, 235, 240, 332, 500.

[23] It is true, as pointed out by many studies, that the antithesis between Apollo and the Erinyes is more complicated than just an opposition of the male versus the female, but my argument otherwise focuses on the gender issue which is the basis for other contrast elements. The most prominent point that Apollo make in his defense is certainly his rejection of the mother as a parent in sexual procreation (*Eum*. 657ff), which supports his entire justification for the vengeance by Orestes. On the study of Apollo and the Erinyes, see Zeitlin (1978), Brown (1983), Goldhill (1992).

And here again, the issue of "birth from one or two" occupies the core concern of their dispute. But this time, Apollo's claim is even more straightforward in his rivalry with the Erinyes: he insists on an extreme form of patriarchal order of "being born from one", namely that a child only has one parent, the father, and the mother does not count, although, biologically speaking, she is still involved in the sexual procreation (*Eum*. 657-66). This claim in favour of social order directly denies the ontological significance of the female, which is a strong response to Clytemnestra's emphasis on Iphigeneia's death from the standpoint of a mother. The tensions between men and women, patriarchy and sexual opposition, social order and natural justice now crystalize and the tragic tension reaches its climax.

In this sharply divided society, we all know what happens next: a resolution to the tragic conflict is presented. In very much the same way as in the myth of Kekrops, citizens caste a vote for a choice of social value, and the result went in the female goddesses' favour by a mere single vote.[24] But then, following an interventional vote by Athena, the male ultimately won the debate and Athens finally proposed to establish autochthonous order in human society.

However, after the play has deliberately prolonged the narrative with such an exaggeratedly long presentation of sexual conflicts – for the entire two and a half plays! – Athena's establishment of autochthonous order here seems to have been much harder and even more forced a construction, although it is indeed achieved as the origin of Athenian institutional structure in the end. The additional effort of Athena is indicated very clearly: since, when we are about to think that the story will finally return to the normal denouement of autochthonous myth and celebrate the victory of autochthonous order, our expectation is interrupted again. Athena's goal was thwarted. As we have mentioned at the beginning of this section, after Athena's siding with men as well as her confirmation of Orestes and Apollo as the winners of the lawsuit – which is supposed to be the ending of the autochthonous myth – the Erinyes, the defeated party, revolted again,

[24] Concerning the number of the voters, there has been much debate on whether the solution is 11+ 1 in which Athena makes up the original 12, or she is a 13th. I am not going to discuss this point in great length as the debate is a matter of a detailed procedure of the democracy *per se* and, in terms of the narrative plot and dramatic meaning, either reading would work for my interpretation that, at this point, Athens is a society extremely divided by gender and sexuality and it is the *one* extra vote that matters. For the debate, see Sommerstein [(2008) 221-6] who proposed the former solution against the main rival view.

calling for a *second* effort from Athena. This extra episode ironically indicates that even the divine order would cause worries in human society, although the reversal finally resulted in a resolution by the goddess. And in such a context, the concession of the Erinyes to Athena – which is often the subject of wonder by readers – becomes significant: the Erinyes' voluntary acceptance of Athena's suggestion is central for the social order for which the goddess is aiming. To make the newly-established order work, those threats to social stability must securely be suppressed. The best solution is, of course, that the power of disorder voluntarily subordinates itself to order so that an agreement of peace could permanently and stably be achieved. But, with the second effort of Athena, we have seen that this final victory is at any rate not easy.

It is imperative to note that, at their revolt, the Erinyes stressed their ancient identity again (*Eum*. 791-92, 821-22, 837-47). Now with all the issues of human nature and sexuality, we can understand that the goddesses' resentment is not merely a rejection of the judgement of the daughter of Zeus, but a reminder of the tragic nature of the human world which had long been recognized in the old time but was almost forgotten in the new era.[25] It should not be forgotten that Hesiod had already made it very clear that the pre-condition of the success of Zeus' principle is his supreme power of eliminating the female and effectively changing the procreation pattern from "birth from the two" to "birth from the one", if he wants. But when the human world of sexual procreation cannot really achieve such a goal, it is in fact impossible to make Zeus' order work in this different society.

In fact, such a worry has long been indicated. Not only did Electra express her concerns when she was required to deny the identity of her mother as a parent, but also, when Orestes was about to kill Clytemnestra, he himself hesitated (*Choe*. 899). Moreover, facing Apollo's proposal that the significance of the mother, i.e. woman, should be entirely removed from society, the human voters evidently had some qualms about it. It was not

[25] The contrast between the old and new order can be seen clearly in the divine *eris* between Apollo the son of Zeus and the Erinyes the very ancient goddesses from the pre-Zeus generation. In the *Oresteia*, the Erinyes are portrayed as old virgins, being the children of Night (*Eum*. 322, 416, 745, 792, 822, 843, 1034). They not only embrace all the violent and dark features of chthonic monsters, but also are antithetical powers against the Olympian gods. The abrupt contrast between the Erinyes and Olympians, dark and bright, the pre-Zeus and post-Zeus, thus on the one hand manifests the irresolvable opposition between the two divine parties, and on the other hand confirms the pre-Zeus nature of the human world.

half of all the human beings but emphatically half of the *male* citizens (Aeschylus' version) who voted for the defence of the female Erinyes – even men are uncomfortable with only valuing the male in a sexual society. The almost balanced vote itself shows the real condition of the human world where the existence of women can hardly be ignored.[26]

Under this context, we now see the significance of that second effort by Athena in Aeschylus' tragic writing. Instead of establishing the autochthonous order so smoothly as imagined in the civic discourse, Aeschylus shows a necessary resistance and an implied problem in such a process: it is an imitation of the divine order, a glorious construction indeed, but also a *reverse* – even a rejection – of the nature of human world. In order to make this happen, Athena needs to make a greater effort. Therefore, although the tragic performance may in the end confirm the significance of Athena's intervention and her teaching, it conveys no less unsettled feelings of such a reinforcement.

Now let us ask a very simple question in the end: what does it mean to establish an autochthonous order? As we can see, at the end of the play, the answer to this question actually becomes very intricate. We can say that, ending with a tone of blessing, the play indeed manifests a "charter for the city" but this charter, with all the delay, turbulence, resistance and forceful effort as well as the complicated relationship between justice and order, men and women, human nature and constructed principle, seems no longer a pure victory in the picture of the civic discourse but invites reflections, questions and even worries. Through the intricate writing, the *Oresteia* shows the complexity of these issues and for the citizens who watched this play in the Athenian theatre, this complexity would lead them to another realm of the mythic thinking: to consider carefully the civic telling of their glorious past as well as their promising future.

II. The *Ion*: Imitating the Divine Order? Better Not Again

If, for Aeschylus, autochthony as an imitation of the divine order is still a plausible scheme for social order, albeit one that is questionable regarding the issue of justice, for Euripides, however, even such a thought is problematic. If there is a gap between

[26] In response to the evolutionary theory, with the almost balanced vote, we can see that actually the famous law court scene in the *Eumenides* is rather ironic: it shows not a victory of law but a tragic situation of the human world where the law is found to be *incapable* of working well by itself but calls for a forceful intervention from the divine world.

autochthonous order and social justice, how can it really work in a real human society? In his play *Ion*, which was staged almost half a century later, we see that this younger tragedian goes further: he turns his eyes directly to the parallel order of the two worlds and questions the divine-human relationship *per se*. For Euripides, the irreconcilable gap between natural justice and the constructed order is in essence rooted in the necessary inconsistency between the human world and the divine world. Athens's revolutionary attempt at imitating the divine order for human social order is destined to fail because human society in reality is by nature incompatible with divine society.

This central concern of the divine-human relationship could be seen straightforwardly in Euripides' setting of the play: instead of taking Athens alone as the only venue for his story, Euripides innovatively involves in his writing another venue, Delphi, the divine place of oracle, as a distinguished counterpart of Athens. With a clear and balanced division between the two venues, the *Ion* is constructed with a dual structure: on the one hand, there is a divine realm (Delphi), and on the other, there is a human world (Athens). *From* Delphi *to* Athens: through Ion's *return* to his motherland, Athens, this human city is explicitly shown to be differentiated and thus separated from the divine space.[27]

In such an explicit separation, a gap between the divine world and the human world, divine order and human order, autochthony and human reality is indicated. If autochthony, as imagined, is really identical with the divine order, this unique setting would otherwise trigger its audience to wonder: how far exactly is it from the divine

[27] This setting has long been a big puzzle for scholarly reading, since no matter how much the play could be read as a Delphic drama which focuses on divine works of Apollo (Wassermann (1940), Burnett (1962), Rosivach (1977) and Hunter (2011)) or an Athenian tragedy which narrates exclusively an Athenian legend (Loraux (1981), Zeitlin (1989), Goff (1988), Saxonhouse (1986) and Segal (1999)), the noticeable discrepancy among the readings of the two venues shows the trouble of dealing with such a seemingly-unnecessary combination. My reading in this section is responding to those traditional interpretations. For me, it is precisely such a discrepancy that is really noteworthy. In setting up the two independent physical spaces with a clear boundary between them, Euripides is in essence highlighting differences between the two venues. An investigation of the two worlds as well as their relation in autochthony thus requires a balanced reading of both sites. With regard to the third kind of reading which takes the *Ion* as an Ionian play, my own reading is also intended to make a response. As we can see, although the protagonist Ion is recognized as the progenitor of Ionian emigrants, the entire thematic focus is otherwise Athenian autochthony. Therefore, it is very hard to take the Ionian tradition as the main topic of the play.

world to the human world? And how separate is the imagination of autochthony from human reality?

Of course, such questions would not be raised in the beginning, since the relationship between Delphi and Athens is presented as changing gradually. As we will see, at the very start, Athens is still imagined to be a divine-like city. The progeny of the autochthonous family indeed makes a great effort to maintain the ideal social order by imitating the divine order and those Athenians in Delphi do find themselves intimate with the divine realm. However, all the later tragic conflicts will show the great failure of such an effort. An irreconcilable gap between human society and divine/autochthonous order will become more and more visible. Through these changes, as we will see, Euripides does not only present the tension between Athens and Delphi, but also attempts to offer an aetiology for such a tension. Therefore, if we are to understand why Athens is destined to fail its ideal order, it is necessary for us to start with the story before the failure, with the height of autochthony, and see how those changes happened.

The spirit of autochthony in Athens can be recognized readily right at the beginning of the play. Although the contemporary age is already many generations later than the primordial time, this founding culture has been handed down to Creusa and her city. An obvious self-consciousness of keeping the established autochthonous order could be seen throughout Creusa's words and deeds. Not only does Creusa know the history of her ancestors thoroughly by heart (*Ion* 260-72), but also, when she faces potential threats to the city, she follows the autochthonous principle so well that the interrupted order could be quickly restored.

One telling example is her incident with Apollo. When Creusa was still a girl, she was raped by the god and then gave birth to a son. This is certainly a great violation of social norms, in which the sexual act of the female should never be out of social control. When such a crisis happened, what we see is that Creusa abandoned the baby immediately and talked no more about the rape. Of course, as a mother, such an action is not the only option – she could also keep the baby – but by depriving herself of such a chance to save her own son and suppressing her female voice completely,[28] Creusa as a

[28] The contrast between the silence of Creusa and her affronted feelings towards the rape shows the dramatic tension within and without Creusa. Nearly all of Creusa's narratives about her rape are with rage and pain (336-354, 419-509, 880-910, 936-96) except the last one (1473-96) in which the tone is gentle because of the mother's happiness at

daughter of the autochthonous family was in effect refusing any possibility of violating the established order in this patriarchal society.

The symbolic custom of her ancestor brings out the significance of Creusa's deeds. It is noticeable that, when Creusa abandoned the baby, she wrapped him in a basket decorated by golden serpents and left him at the cave where Erechtheus was swallowed. This practice of the ancient custom not only brings back the old tradition to life, but also through removing the product of the violation to defend the ancient order, it makes a strong physical affirmation of this ancient principle (*Ion* 15-26).[29] In Creusa's own words, she made the basket Ἐριχθονίου γε τοῦ πάλαι μιμήματα (*Ion* 1429: in imitation of ancient Erichthonius) since the customs are a δώρημ' Ἀθάνας, οἵς τέκν' ἐντρέφειν λέγει (*Ion* 1428: a gift of Athena which instructs people to nurture children). Now that the birth of this baby violates Athena's teaching of autochthony, its death should then be witnessed by this autochthonous custom so that a purification of the violation could be achieved. As a mother, Creusa is merciless, but as an autochthonous child, she is undoubtedly faithful.

This is why even after the rape, Creusa remains a representative of the γενέτης and οἱ παλαιοί of Athens in the eyes of Athenian people. The old tutor admires his mistress (*Ion* 735-7):

> ὦ θύγατερ, ἄξι' ἀξίων γεννητόρων
> ἤθη φυλάσσεις κού καταισχύνασ' ἔχεις
> τοὺς σοὺς παλαιῶν ἐκγόνους αὐτοχθόνων.
>
> My daughter, you keep customs worthy of your worthy ancestors
> and you do not have shame on
> your ancient line, born of the earth.

recognizing her son. By contrast, the god Hermes' narrative is indifferent without any sympathetic emotion, like a common story.

[29] This is not an imitation of the earth-born action or a "reversal of the myth" as Loraux and Zeitlin have argued. Both Loraux [(1981) 176] and Zeitlin [(1989) 294-97] pay attention to the opposition of "birth" and "death" (Loraux: "imitation as a reversal"; Zeitlin: "to keep and to lose") indicated in this scene. It is true that the death is intended here as a story in opposition to the birth of Erechtheus, however, this is not a reversal of the principle of the story but a re-confirmation.

For the old tutor, Creusa is worthy of admiration as her actions always appear to be in accordance with the ancient principle, i.e. order of autochthony: she was a pure virgin girl and is now a competent loyal wife without betrayal of the sexual relationship.[30] Certainly, for audiences these words are ironic since the old tutor has no idea that Creusa was once raped by Apollo and even had a child; however, this intentional delay of the revelation of the truth is itself significant: even if Creusa is no longer pure in the sense meant by the old tutor, she still successfully maintains autochthonous order and thus deserves to be admired as ἄξι' ἀξίων γεννητόρων (*Ion* 735). In fact, Creusa is even more competent as an autochthonous offspring because she has stood up to the challenge that autochthony in a real world has to face.

As we can see, it is such a stalwart defender of the autochthonous order who goes to Delphi from Athens, along with her Athenian maidens (the Chorus). Now it should not be too surprising that although these Athenians have travelled far from south to north, they seem to feel no alienation at Delphi at all. Because of the teaching of autochthony, these Athenian women found that the divine place is compatible with their city. The two places are not only the same in their holy features (*Ion* 184-89), but also hold a similar principle of order (*Ion* 190-218).[31] So as soon as the chorus go into the temple, they become very excited to see the stories that they know. ἰδού! ὀρῶ! ὀρῶ! (*Ion* 190, 194, 215: Look! I see… I see…).[32] They look around as if those stories are all their own history:[33]

[30] On the old tutor as a defender of the ancient principle, see Walsh (1978) 304-7.

[31] A group of fierce battles between the Olympian gods/heroes (Herakles, Bellerophon, Athena, Zeus and Dionysus) and the violent chthonic monsters (Hydra, Chimaira, Enkelados, Mimas and Giants) are drawn. The battles end with a triumph of the former over the latter, through which the order of Zeus is finally established. For a detailed discussion of the temple scene, see Rosivach (1977) especially 288. He is right to point out that the scene is depicted as a "symbol of Olympian, and especially Apolline, triumph over the forces of Earth", however to allude to this triumph "a triumph of Apollo over Kreusa" may go too far. Creusa cannot be compared directly to the forces of Earth. Although she exposes her violent feminine chthonic aspect in the second part of the play, in the first half of the play, Creusa's attempt to maintain order is shown otherwise to be exactly opposite to the forces of chaotic Earth.

[32] The action of "looking" is repeated a great many times intensively in this scene: *Ion*. 190, 193, 194, 201, 205, 206, 208, 209, 211, 215. The intimacy between the Athenian people and the divine mythic world is displayed vividly. On the nearness of the mythic world, see Segal (1999) 100, Loraux (1981) 177.

[33] As Rosivach [(1977) 284] points out, the narrative of the sculptures of the temple is obviously different from the archaeological evidence: "Euripides has taken liberties with his material by transferring these scenes from the west (rear) side of the temple to its east (front) side where they can be seen by the chorus." For scholars's discussion on this

"Not only in divine Athens (ἐν ταῖς ζαθέαις Ἀθάναις) are there halls of gods with beautiful pillars [...] but also besides the house of Apollo, the son of Leto, there is a light of double countenances with beautiful eyes." (184-89)

The link between the divine realm and the human city is more than symbolic. One scene on the temple wall even directly connects divine history to Athenian history. This scene depicts Athena's fight with the Gorgon in the chthonic battle (*Ion* 209-11). According to Creusa, right after the victory of Zeus, the goddess obtained two drops of the Gorgon's blood in person and then gave them to the autochthonous ancestors as a gift.[34] Now, with this divine gift, the autochthonous family is substantially linked to the divine world. And what is more, because the chthonic war so significant to Zeus' establishment of his ruling order, such a gift from the daughter of Zeus certainly means more than a mere honour, but indicates an internal connection between the gift-giver and its new owner: Athenian autochthony is essentially an inheritance from the divine principle.[35]

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issue, see Rosivach (1977) note 3. While I disagree with the interpretation of Rosivach about the intention of Euripides' innovation (Rosivach suggests that Euripides takes advantage of the presentation of chthonic battle to indicate the "triumph of Apollo over the opposition of Kreusa"), I do find this point interesting to note. Since there is an explicit difference between the real temple and the narrated one, we may guess that, for audiences who are familiar with the layout of Delphi, this narrative may have reflected the chorus's questionable fervid enthusiasm in linking the two realms through a concept of holy divinity. As we shall see in later discussion, Athenians' perception of the relation between human society and the divine world indeed has a large deviation. The potential conflicts in the interactions between these two realms may have already been implied from the very beginning.

[34] This tale is probably an innovation of Euripides – at least an adaption of some rather unpopular versions. Euripides himself suggests the uniqueness of this tale through the mouth of the old tutor who questions the authenticity of Creusa's narrative: ἆρ' οὗτός ἐσθ' ὁ μῦθος ὃν κλύω πάλαι; (994) It is clear that this version deliberately combines the elements of the Gorgon, chthonic battle, autochthony and Athena together for the sake of the theme of the play. This special combination indicates Euripides' specific concern about the interconnection of these elements and the theme that they altogether can present. For the discussion of Euripides' innovation of this tale, see Mastronarde (1975) 168, especially note 33. See also Whitman (1974) 98, Sokolon (2013) 39.

[35] The essence of Athenian autochthony is order. It is constructed for the sake of order, and it originates from divine order, which suppresses disorder; therefore, it is wrong to argue that the nature of this principle itself possesses a dark side. To argue that autochthony has a nature of monstrosity is thus also misleading. On the discussion of the dark side of autochthony, see Loraux (1981) 198-203, Segal (1999) 82, Swift (2008), Mastronarde (2003), Zacharia (2003), Sokolon (2013) 38, 48, Nimis (2007). On the

Now we have seen how closely Athens is linked to the divine realm and how closely the order of autochthony is followed by the contemporary Athenians. But as we know, soon after Creusa and Xuthus go to the temple – soon after Ion is recognized by Xuthus as his son – all of the terrible conflicts appear. If the principle of autochthony is so favourable a scheme for maintaining order, and if Creusa defends such an order so well and so faithfully, how can these changes even happen? In order to understand this unexpected turning point, we will now turn to the second part of the play where the power of disorder overwhelms the established order.

In terms of the tragic plot, Creusa is undoubtedly the central figure who is responsible for all the changes.[36] It is she who breaks the existing rule of order, who comes up with the plan for the killing, and who is involved in the deadly conflict with Ion. But we should notice that Creusa herself changes remarkably, too. In contrast to the previous glorious image of her as an ἄξιος γεννήτωρ (*Ion* 735) successor of the autochthonous house, Creusa now gives up all the efforts that she has made and becomes a violent, sinister and unmerciful woman who does not defend order but destroys it. More importantly, in the transition, she no longer conceals her rape history but reveals all of its details to both the old tutor and her son. If the daughter of Erechtheus is dedicated to the order of autochthony so firmly in the beginning, how can such a dramatic change suddenly happen to her? All of these transformations indicate that Creusa's change is actually the real significant change which needs more attention and should be examined prior to all the other changes.

Now if Creusa herself does not transform on her own terms, who or what leads to it? Is it because of Ion? Xuthus? Or Apollo? Of course, all of them contributed to this transformation but, in fact, none of them is the direct cause for it. In the following reading, I would like to suggest that it is actually the imagined Delphi girl – another woman in the play – who initially triggers the entire event and, as we will see soon, it is this woman who forms the most important cause for the turning point of the entire tragedy.

The Delphi girl is critical in the play, although she is only an imaginary figure. She appears twice, first in Xuthus' absurd presumption (*Ion* 543-54) and then in the old tutor's anxious imagination (*Ion* 808-31). In both cases, the Delphi girl is taken as a

discussion of the double aspects of autochthony (legitimacy and monstrosity), see Goff (1988).

[36] Loraux (1993) 184.

possible biological origin of Ion. While on the first occasion this girl is mentioned perfunctorily, on the second occasion she is taken seriously as a significant enemy and directly leads to Creusa's angry revenge.[37] Why does the Delphi girl matter so much to Creusa? The old tutor's words reveal the reasons (*Ion* 808-09, 815-16, 837-42):

> δέσποινα, προδεδόμεσθα
> τοῦ σοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς
> […]
> ἄλλης γυναικὸς παῖδας ἐκκαρπούμενος
> λάθρᾳ πέφηνεν. ὡς λάθρᾳ δ', ἐγὼ φράσω.
> […]
> καὶ τῶνδ' ἀπάντων ἔσχατον πείσῃ κακόν:
> ἀμήτορ', ἀναρίθμητον, ἐκ δούλης τινὸς
> γυναικὸς ἐς σὸν δῶμα δεσπότην ἄγειν.
> ἁπλοῦν ἂν ἦν γὰρ τὸ κακόν, εἰ παρ' εὐγενοῦς
> μητρός, πιθών σε, σὴν λέγων ἀπαιδίαν,
> ἐσῴκισ' οἴκους. . .
>
> Mistress, we are betrayed
> by your man!
> […]
> With another woman he fathered children
> secretly, it is now revealed: how secretly, I will tell you.
> […]
> And you will suffer the ultimate evil of all:
> to take a motherless, insignificant, slave-woman-born
> master into your own house.

[37] Although having no idea about the absurd conversation between Xuthus and Ion, the old tutor picks up such presumption and believes it firmly. He even adds many details about how Xuthus breeds the child secretly and how he plans a seemingly-accidental meeting between them (817-31). The double assumptions of the Delphi girl are not a coincidence. The way Xuthus treats Ion itself implies something secret for the tutor, which makes the assumption quite reasonable. The old tutor's firm belief on the existence of the Delphi girl further indicates how normal and how possible such an affair could be.

This would have been only one simple evil,
if he had persuaded you and brought into the house,
talking about your childlessness,
a child born of a noble mother. . .

The thought of the old tutor here is interesting. What he is truly angry about is actually not the *existence* of a Delphi girl itself, but the potential *disorder* that her presence may cause. The unknown girl indeed embodies a secret affair of Xuthus, λάθρᾳ (*Ion* 816, twice emphasized). However, for the old tutor, the τῶνδ' ἀπάντων ἔσχατον κακόν (*Ion* 837: the last evil of all) is not the secret union *per se* but the very act that Xuthus brings the child into the house without letting his wife know (*Ion* 838-42). In fact, the old tutor says, if Xuthus could persuade and discuss the issue openly with Creusa (*Ion* 841: πιθών σε, σὴν λέγων ἀπαιδίαν), there would not be such an unforgivable evil. Indeed, Xuthus adopts the worst stratagem: when he brings the "bastard son" back home without Creusa's knowledge, the nature of Ion's return is decisively changed. It becomes an unexpected betrayal of the sexual relationship rather than a possibly good adoption by both parents. What is worse, Xuthus' blatant confirmation of his promiscuous past even stokes the anger of his wife: while she has tried so hard to defend the autochthonous value by silencing her own shameful rape, he, on the contrary, appears to be eager to let everyone know his "achievement". In both senses, Xuthus has gone too far beyond control and undermines all the efforts that have been made by Creusa for the sake of the established order.

It is this ἔσχατον κακόν that leads to the final collapse of Creusa. She cries out (*Ion* 866-75):

φροῦδαι δ' ἐλπίδες, ἃς διαθέσθαι
χρῄζουσα καλῶς οὐκ ἐδυνήθην,
σιγῶσα γάμους,
σιγῶσα τόκους πολυκλαύτους.
[…]
οὐκέτι κρύψω λέχος, ὅ στέρνων
ἀπονησαμένη ῥᾴων ἔσομαι.

> The hopes are vanished, which I wished
> to arrange well but I could not,
> when I was silent on the union,
> when I was silent on the much lamented childbirth.
> […]
> I will no longer conceal this bed. If I
> throw off this load from my chest, I will become easy.

These words announce the entire failure of Creusa and also indicate the transition that the autochthonous daughter is going to experience. Because of *that* woman, Creusa finds that all her previous efforts to maintain the order of the house turn out to be in vain. Now her most cherished order is threatened and, ironically, the crisis comes from outside, from someone else whom she does not even know. No matter how well she managed to suppress *herself* and be silent about the disorder individually (*Ion* 868-69: σιγῶσα appears twice as the first word of a line),[38] she can by no means resist the destructive power that *another woman* holds. She wished to arrange order (*Ion* 866: διαθέσθαι) but fails (*Ion* 867: οὐκ ἐδυνήθην). All of these are out of Creusa's expectation: what a dramatic contrast to her early stage!

In terms of her own family fate, Creusa is of course lucky. We later know that this "bastard" son happens to be her own child. But this scene does not fail to indicate the possibility of a real bastard son and the product of uncontrollable sexuality. Xuthus' careless presumption about his sleeping with a "Delphi girl" by accident in the pleasure of Bacchus (*Ion* 553: Βακχίου πρὸς ἡδοναῖς) reveals not only that he has indeed had such an affair but also that he, as a normal man, finds it natural to be overwhelmed by the sudden temptation of erotic allure and so his sex with a stranger girl just happens without any hesitation. For him, an ordinary foreign man who has not learn the Athenian principle of autochthony, adulteries, erotic desire and sexual affairs are all natural occurrences, as *eros* is itself the very original power that could never be got rid of. Xuthus' secret affair, a

[38] LaRue [(1963) 127-28] in her analysis of hymnal style points out that Creusa no longer keeping silent is in essence a transition from obeying divine order to rebelling against the divine deeds, which shows "woman against the god". Here this action implies two meanings. First, "woman" as a subject becomes Creusa's identity; second, what Creusa no longer maintains is both autochthonous order and Apollonian order.

plausibly believable story, and Creusa's own experiences all demonstrate that every wife may possibly encounter a "Delphi girl" – and every woman may herself potentially become a "Delphi girl".

Creusa may not have even realized that actually she herself is also to a certain degree a "Delphi girl", because she has also had sex with Apollo out of the god's sexual desire. But what eased the sexual tension in her case is that, unlike the "Delphi girl" who chooses to keep the child alive and to allow the continual presence of disorder, Creusa deliberately chooses to suppress her sexual history and to eliminate the product of the sexual union so that order is maintained. However, there is something distinct about Creusa. She is the successor of the autochthonous family, so she could devote herself to the principles of autochthony and keep the constructed order at the cost of her own pain; but other ordinary women (and men) who are not educated in such orthodox may not find this principle desirable to follow. The result is that, although Creusa is able to self-restrain her feminine power in an autochthonous way, other men and women disappoint her expectation.

Euripides' specific emphasis on the sex caused by *eros* brings us back to archaic thought where it is precisely unavoidable sexual desire that causes all the instabilities. The same logic that is seen repeatedly in the *Theogony* is shown here: sexual desire triggers immoderate sexual union; sexual union leads to sexual reproduction; children keep being produced owing to the irresistible desire and thus social change happens out of control.

The Delphi girl may even remind us of the ancient desirable Pandora, the very archetype of woman who introduces sexuality and thus disorder into the human world. And if there really exists such a Pandora, how could Creusa – a follower of autochthony but also a woman in human society – defend the social order of her city without considering thoroughly the sudden impulse of sexual desire? Now we know that what really leads to Creusa's failure is the very nature of *eros*, as well as the nature of dual-sexed relationships in the real human world, that she failed to fully understand. And what is more ironic is that with Xuthus the new father and Apollo the old father of Ion, now the boy's parents become three: Creusa may have never expected that, in the real human world, what is more common is not her "birth from the one" (or from none, as the case of Erichthonius) but "birth from the three".

Creusa did not keep an ideal autochthonous order in the real sexual world in the end. Women's necessary presence and the strong power of desire both suggest that the controlling of the absolute other is too wishful and idealized. Since women cannot be literally excluded from the reproductive cycle, they can never strictly be suppressed or controlled as imagined in mythic narratives. In the real human world, what Creusa intends to suppress always exists. Symbolic gestures remain merely symbolic. Creusa – as well as the audience – has to admit the discrepancy between reality and mythic history. Although the order of autochthony endeavours to regulate the sexual relationship through a monistic pattern, the dualist structure of the procreation *per se* far exceeds the dimension that such attempts can reach. The suppression of the female by the social system and the surrender of the female to the established order are only matters of degree: the female power in the real human world can fundamentally never be eliminated – women cannot, after all, like Metis who is literally swallowed by Zeus, just disappear from the world. The principle of autochthony is thus very likely to be *fragile* in human society no matter how *holy* and *ideal* it is. Even if it can be maintained forcefully (and violently) within a system of belief, as Creusa has done, it is still unable to fully withstand challenge from outside the boundaries of the autochthonous system, as the intruding of the foreigner Xuthus, the imagined Delphi girl and the self-assertive Apollo have shown.

Since the order she valued can no longer work well, Creusa for the first time decides to reveal the rape and to release the heavy burden that she has had to bear uneasily for the autochthonous house (*Ion* 875). Now she is going γυναικεῖόν τι δρᾶν, "to do some *female* thing"! (*Ion* 843)[39] This is a powerful announcement that proclaims Creusa's full recognition of her nature as a woman. It marks the transitional point, after which all her long-suppressed feminine factors are evoked. From here, Creusa leaves her divine autochthony and enters into the real human world where purity, brightness, order and harmony are mixed with impurity, darkness, disorder and conflict, and where the female is not silently suppressed but remarkably takes action. Now Creusa's dramatic transformation strongly parallels the transition of Ion, who exits the divine realm and enters human society, since her revenge will take place exactly at the very tent where Ion and Xuthus celebrate the boy's return from Delphi to Athens.

[39] This sentence is proposed by the old tutor, but it is fully accepted by Creusa as her own guide to action.

The weapon that Creusa uses to kill Ion is one of the most typical feminine weapons: poison.[40] And this drug is here even more special because it is made of the blood of the Gorgon that has been discussed above. As we have mentioned, the two drops of the Gorgon's blood are originally given by Athena to the ancestor of autochthony as a gift for the founding of the city. In receiving this booty, Athens confirms its compatible principle with divine order: a conquering and a control of the dangerous, dark, feminine powers. This gift is kept in the hands of the male rulers for many generations, unused, until Creusa, the female successor. In returning to a feminine figure and awakening the long-suppressed power, Creusa re-introduces darkness, chaos and conflicts into the world. The activating of the toxic blood shows explicitly a revival of the pre-Zeus disorder. All the violent defeated powers that have been chained for generations under the rule of Zeus now reappear in the human world.[41] And it is prompted by a woman, a human creature.

Creusa's destructive characteristics are fully revealed. Creusa, who was a glorious figure of autochthony, is now a horrible woman and is called a terrible killer.[42] The returning of the woman, the revival of the chthonic monster's power, and the tricks, secrets, rebellions and death, all synchronize with the reappearance of the pre-Zeus chaos. The rebellion of Creusa marks the total failure of autochthony.

The tent where the woman intends "to do some female thing" further strengthens such a dramatic tension: it was constructed for a celebration but now becomes the very place for destruction. The tent built by Ion was intended to be a place of bliss,[43] as we can see from the construction itself: it consists of three parts – the roof, the wall and the entrance – and these three sections altogether present an ideal order of the world. On the

[40] *Ion* 616-17: ὅσας σφαγὰς δὴ φαρμάκων <τε> θανασίμων/ γυναῖκες ηὗρον ἀνδράσιν διαφθοράς; Cf. *Ion* 1220, 1279.

[41] It is interesting to note that the two drops of Gorgon blood are also said to be kept in a golden chain (1007: χρυσοῖσι δεσμοῖς). This image implies that the power of the blood drops is chained for generations until Creusa breaks the chain and releases it.

[42] Creusa's horrible image: *Ion* 1262-65.

[43] In terms of the issue of order and disorder, idealized world and realistic world, Ion as the constructor of the tent is worth noting. It seems that Ion constructs the tent according to his own perception of Athens. The harmonious tent and the three corresponding parts indicate strongly its parallel to the idealized construction of the Parthenon temple in Athens as well as the divine temple in Delphi, as we shall see. This parallel indicates that, in Ion's mind, the autochthonous principle in Athens indeed equals the divine order of Zeus. And later, it is this constructor who suffers the fiercest conflict within the construction: there is no doubt an irony and tension.

roof, there is a woven picture about an ordered cosmos and divine world,[44] where three generations of gods are living in harmony under the rule of Zeus.[45] The wall under the roof shows a human world within this cosmos. It depicts the battle between Greeks and barbarians – a strong echo of the Gigantomachy in the Delphi temple: a battle fighting for order. The entrance presents the establishment of Athenian autochthonous order, where Kekrops and his daughters are shown. From the heaven to the earth: this is an ideal cosmos in the eyes of Ion as well as Athenian people.[46] The familiar structure of the tent can even remind audience of the Parthenon temple, which presents a very similar world with these three parts.[47]

However, whereas the Parthenon temple and the tent themselves carry the people's wish for an ideal autochthonous order in a harmonious cosmos, such a wish turns out to be impossible here. With all the tragic conflicts on show, the blessing symbol for Ion's return home becomes a challenge to this traditional bliss: whereas the tent

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[44] As Goff [(1988) 43] points out, this tapestry shows an ordered cosmology with "circular repetitive motion of the heavens as a whole, the regular succession of day and night". It portrays a tranquil night where Ouranos gathers the stars in a ring sky and other gods of night drive either horse or chariot peacefully. Unlike the temple sculptures which depict the world of gods against the dark chthonic monsters in fierce battles, the picture in the tent presents a calm and quite moment. Zeitlin [(1996) 316] argues that, with the shining stars, there is no sign of disorder that is connected to the terrible darkness.

[45] The first generation: Ouranos, Nyx; the second: Helios, Eos the Titans; and the third: Pleiades, Orion, Arktos, Hyades.

[46] On this point, I find it hard to agree with Goff (1988), who regards the presentation of the tent as a pattern of order and violence (and later proposes a reading of the discourse of autochthony as "double aspects of legitimacy and monstrosity", against which I will argue later) and suggests that the tent itself indicates an "uneasy symbiosis". (47) She holds that, while the roof is a presentation of order, the wall and the entrance (she categorises them wrongly both belong to the wall) "appear to deny any place to order and coherence". (43) It is a battle indeed. But this battle in which Greeks fight against barbarians is not presented as an endless chaotic war but a triumph of the Greek side, i.e. the civilized people. There is no point in taking such a battle not in a positive light. In fact, with three other important wars (Gigantomachy, Centauromachy, Iliupersis), the barbarian battle (Amazonomachy) also appears as a crucial theme on the metopes of the Parthenon temple, which cannot be interpreted as a symbol of chaos; instead, they are all presentations of the merits of Greeks. Such resonance suggests a more profound connection between the tent scene and the Athenian city. As we see, the roof (cosmology), the wall (battle) and the entrance (autochthony) in the tent correspond perfectly with the pediments (cosmology), the metopes (battle) and the friezes (autochthony) of the Parthenon. Therefore, there is a consistency in and between the presentations of the tent, Apollo's temple and the Parthenon in Athens, and such consistency manifests the coherent principle of the divine world and the principle of autochthony.

[47] For the depiction of the Parthenon temple, see my discussion in chapter 2.

depicts representations of the divine world as a frame for human action, the crucial transition of Ion, the fundamental change of Creusa as well as the violent subversion of disorder over order within the tent all go strongly against that divine model. The more the tent is presented in an idealized way, the clearer the break is shown to be.[48] In such a space where common principles are shared, social identities are constructed and social group as a unity are celebrated, the occurrence of violent conflicts displays fully the unharmonious relation between the real human condition and the mythical education.[49]

Γυναικεῖόν τι δρᾶν (*Ion* 843): this is the peak moment of tragic conflict when the proposed killing is about to happen. With the deep connection between the action of woman and the pre-Zeus disorder, the tragic plot in the play exposes the fundamental condition of the human world: while human society attempts to establish a stable order by imitating the world of Zeus, it may never be able to achieve it, as the human world can hardly break away from the shackle of the "pre-Zeus" model and the feminine power cannot be successfully and entirely removed. The fundamental sexual relationship determines that the framework of the human world in reality could never be like that of Zeus' world, so divine order cannot justifiably be imitated in human society. Because of the fundamentally dualistic structure in sexual relationships, human society can hardly get rid of those unsettled tensions between male and female, brightness and darkness, ruling and revolution, as well as dominance and rebellion. The ever-lasting tensions in the human world suggest that the gap between human order and divine order is in fact unbridgeable. In the real world, human anxiety about disorder can never cease. At this moment, Euripides seems to have returned to the Hesiodic tragic vision, and the sweet dream of classical Athens is broken.

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[48] Although I find many interpretations on the tent scene insightful, I cannot agree with their overall ideas about the tent as an unquestionable representation of the reality. There are actually two levels to the symbolic principle of the tent: firstly, it indeed presents an idealized imagination about the cosmos, which in turn helps to construct both individual identity (Ion) and communal principles (Athens); but secondly, as the disordered conflicts shown, the ideal construction cannot be entirely realized, which shows the tension between the imagination and reality. Goff (1988) and Mastronarde (1975) try to explain such tension from another viewpoint by indicating that the pictures of the tent themselves embody a representation of disorder. However, it is logically problematic: as a space built for the construction of identity in an ordered and civilized city, how can it be shown as negative and full of conflict?

[49] Cf. Burnett (1971) 117, Wolff (1965) 180 and note 1.

Now that the ideal order of autochthony is found to be incompatible with the real human world, how about the divine order which is traditionally appealed to as a model of autochthony? Can divine order and human society still remain consistent with one another in the tragic conflicts?

Ion could have died, if Apollo had not sent a divine sign, the birds, to the banquet (*Ion* 1187-1205). Although the proposed killing does not succeed, Creusa's attempt to take revenge itself otherwise marks the failure of Apollo's original plan.[50] The woman's instinctive rage seems paradoxically beyond the prediction of the god of prophecy.[51] Without his rescue, Creusa would have killed Ion with her tricks. The god's ignorance of Creusa indicates his underestimation of the power of the mortal female, a fatally destructive power.

From the perspective of the god, this ignorance might be understandable. The god, after all, dwells in a different world. Even on earth, Apollo's ruling realm Delphi is a purely ordered place, bright with sunshine.[52] As the son of Zeus, Apollo is born after the chaotic battles of the pre-Zeus era. Since this god does not have to consider those dangerous powers which have already been suppressed by his father king, he would not take the

[50] Besides this obvious failure, Apollo's plan, as Lloyd [(1986) 33] points out, threatens to go wrong many times: "Ion is indeed, as planned, accepted by Xuthus as his son and accepts him as a father, but he shows no enthusiasm for the life intended for him in Athens and would rather stay in Delphi; Creusa finds out about the plan and tries to kill him; he then threatens to kill Creusa himself, and is only reconciled with her by the intervention of the Pythia; and finally, even when mother and son have been reunited, Ion refuses to believe that Apollo is his father until he is enlightened by Athena's appearance *ex machina*. The god of prophecy fails to foresee these obstacles to his own plan. Apollo's earlier behavior can also be criticized: the anguish caused to Creusa by his rape of her is frequently expressed in the play, and even Ion is horrified that he might have acted in the way that she described."

[51] Cf. Pindar *Pythian* 9 where Apollo is also presented as unclear about the future when it comes to women. The two texts both indicate a paradox that the god of prophecy can't read this situation.

[52] The violent chthonic powers on the façade of the temple are presented as an object of tourist pleasure. By comparison, the tent is deliberately constructed shutting out the rays of the sun. Zeitlin (1996) 312-13. Also see Zeitlin's inspiring discussion about Apollo (light/Delphi) and Dionysus (dark/tent) and the relationship of cosmic representations. It is noticeable that, although Apollo is the main character, Dionysus is the only god who gets a ritual cult from human beings (Xuthus).

woman as a potential threat to his plan, as Zeus would not consider any goddesses as a revolutionary power.[53]

But the divine way of thinking turns out to be wrong in the human world, where those conquered powers are still active.[54] As the play shows, unlike the goddesses under Zeus' rule, women in human society are still dangerous as an absolute other to men. In such a mortal world, Apollo finds that his plan, which seems natural to him, cannot work.[55] The same principle fails to be applied to a different world. Indeed, when a god sleeps with a mortal woman, the boundary between the divine world and the human world seems to have been crossed. However, such a combination never gives birth to a normal child in a human society. Rather, it leads to endless sufferings, as in the case of Creusa.[56] The gap between the divine world and the human world is irreconcilable and uncompromising.[57]

The failure of Apollo's plan leads not only to an unexpected violence when Ion attempts to return to Athens but also a disclosure of the rape, which is actually beyond the original intention of the god. At the most tension-filled moment when the child is going to kill the woman, the priestess of Apollo brings the crucial basket onto the stage: it is very the one that held Ion when Creusa abandoned him many years ago. This is a

[53] Apollo (god) and Creusa (human) show different attitudes toward the rape: 10-35, 336-354, 491-509, 880-910, 936-56, 1473-96. Divine indifference: 881ff. Cf. 905ff.

[54] The image of Apollo in this play is also identical to that in the *Oresteia* where this male god only represents men without consideration of women in human society. And similarly, Apollo found his view to be hardly accepted by human beings and the vote turned out to be tied, which indicates explicitly that at least half of mortals are not in favour of Apollo's standpoint.

[55] Besides Creusa, the Chorus is also another female agent who turns the tables by telling Creusa about her misfortune. Zeitlin (1996) 315.

[56] In Greek literature, although it is very common for a divine and a mortal to breed a child, it is rather uncommon for the child to become a normal and blessed human being. The child is either endowed with super-natural characters, becoming super-man, such as heroes in Homer's *Iliad*, or is likely to be treated badly as a bastard, like Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae.* Even if those heroes are honored as semi-gods, like Achilles, this race nevertheless does not belong to human society within a *polis*, and has to suffer more than normal human beings. Either super-normal or sub-normal, the children are always abnormal. For the parallel between Ion and Dionysus, see Zeitlin (1996) 302-4, Segal (1997) 186, Wassermann (1940) 595.

[57] It should be noted that the boundary between Delphi and its outer space is throughout emphasized. Delphi is a place for mortal beings to come and go, but it is never a residential place for human beings to live in, as there is forever a gap between the world of gods and the world of human beings, and the divine order which human beings endeavor to achieve can never be fully realized.

deliberate interference by the god to *rescue* his almost-failed plan. The priestess states the purpose explicitly: ἐπεί γ' ὸ δαίμων βούλεται, πάροιθε δ' οὔ. (*Ion* 1353: Now the god wishes me [to reveal]; he did not [wish this] before though.) The old basket is presented so abruptly that the break between the plan of the god and the reality can vividly be seen.

It is true that the basket indeed leads to a happy reunion of the two characters, but its presence nevertheless indicates a *reversal* of the original expectations of both immortals and mortals. The basket not only presents an evidence of the blood relationship of the mother and son,[58] but, more importantly, it indicates – ironically – a subversive denial of the previous established order. As Segal insightfully points out, the token in the basket which imitates the autochthonous norms represents "the immature 'maiden-works' of the young girl's still unpracticed loom," and it is used "inappropriately to wrap the illegitimate baby, parallel the interrupted life cycle of the parthenos, raped rather than married".[59] The *revelation* of the basket shows a questionable link between the mythic discourse and the human reality instead of simply a positive confirmed identity for Ion. The rape of Creusa is brought to light and the autochthonous order of purity which Creusa tried to maintain is destroyed (cf. *Ion* 73).

Now the basket which is originally supposed to reaffirm the significance of autochthony at the time of abandonment transforms into open evidence for the violation of that significance. The secret which both Creusa and Apollo hope to keep in the dark can be held no more. In the double failures of divine plan and autochthonous order, the recognition scene presents vividly a contradiction between idealized legitimacy and human reality. Even though the god tries to reverse the chaotic situation, his attempt cannot be fully realized but ironically gives rise to a more painful reversal. Neither divine order nor autochthonous order is prevented from being challenged in the real human world.[60] We see that the dark side of the world constantly exists and is hard to be

[58] It is true that, as argued by many critics, the basket shows an intimate connection between the mother, the son and the social myth of autochthony and the tokens in it resemble an ideal construction of the mythic identity of autochthony; but as we will see, in the context of the tragedy, the basket conveys more than merely a positive sense of autochthony. For the mainstream views, see Loraux (1981) 171, Zeitlin (1996) 293, Mueller (2010). See also Zacharia (2003) 111, Sokolon (2013), McClure (2015), Sloan (2016).

[59] Segal (1999) 71-72. However, Segal still does not see that the token indicates the problematic identity of Ion and thinks that it resolves Creusa's crisis.

[60] At this moment, the basket also recalls the tent. Mueller (2008) insightfully points out the same feature of basket and tent as weaving products, both embracing the "mirroring

repressed or even ignored. This is the lesson that all the characters with divine idealism – Apollo, Ion and Creusa in the early stage – need to learn and have finally learned.[61]

It is notable that the gift which Athena hands down to the autochthonous kings has already indicated such a tragic situation. The gift is significant not only in its link to autochthony, but also in its unique feature of containing two antithetical forms of blood: one for destruction and another for salvation. Although the former plays a more prominent role in the play, as has been noticed by many readings, it is the *combination* of the two that really brings out the comprehensive meaning of this *divine gift*. From a goddess to mortals: the blood shows symbolically that the dual condition of the human world, containing both good and bad, is the result of a divine plan. We have repeatedly seen in previous discussions how the dualistic opposition is perceived as the unique nature of human society which sets it apart from the divine world – in the case of Pandora, her jar and all those tied votes. Here, the Gorgon's blood, again, is framed into this tradition. When the toxic blood is used by the woman beyond Apollo's expectation, this irreconcilable gap between the divine world and the human world is even more painfully shown.

Since the gap between the two worlds is so unbridgeable, the fundamental basis of autochthony is necessarily put to question. Can the divine world really be imitated by human beings? To put it in another way: can human order really base itself justifiably on the divine order? This is the central question that is constantly asked throughout the play and has actually been indicated from the beginning. We may still remember, after the god-nurtured boy hears the rape story of Creusa's "friend", how shocked he is by the deeds of the god (*Ion* 436-443, 448-451):

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effect of these two media in which identity is encoded". Further to Mueller's argument, we can also see the similar pattern of interaction that both media have with the human actions.

[61] Ironically, it is Xuthus who introduces a real human world to the three characters. Contrary to the three figures, Xuthus is presented as the most normal human being. He is the one who lives most remotely from the divine world of Apollo and far away from the principle of autochthony. He knows the secret of concealment and accepted the ambiguity and manipulated it; in the end, he experienced the deception and is going to live as a normal human happily. In a realistic and half-comic light, the interactions between Xuthus and Creusa, Xuthus and Ion as well as Xuthus and Apollo manifest the tensions between the characters on the one hand and the contrast between the principles of two worlds on the other hand.

νουθετητέος δέ μοι
Φοῖβος, τί πάσχει; παρθένους βίᾳ γαμῶν
προδίδωσι; παῖδας ἐκτεκνούμενος λάθρᾳ
θνῄσκοντας ἀμελεῖ; μὴ σύ γ'; ἀλλ', ἐπεὶ κρατεῖς,
ἀρετὰς δίωκε. καὶ γὰρ ὅστις ἂν βροτῶν
κακὸς πεφύκῃ, ζημιοῦσιν οἱ θεοί.
πῶς οὖν δίκαιον τοὺς νόμους ὑμᾶς βροτοῖς
γράψαντας, αὑτοὺς ἀνομίαν ὀφλισκάνειν;
[…]
τὰς ἡδονὰς γὰρ τῆς προμηθίας πέρα
σπεύδοντες ἀδικεῖτ'. οὐκέτ' ἀνθρώπους κακοὺς
λέγειν δίκαιον, εἰ τὰ τῶν θεῶν καλὰ
μιμούμεθ', ἀλλὰ τοὺς διδάσκοντας τάδε.

I must admonish Phoebus.
What happened to him? After having sex with the virgin by force,
he abandoned her? He secretly bred a child
but neglected his death? Surely not you? As you hold the rule,
you should pursue virtue. Since if any mortal being
is born to be bad, the gods punish him.
So how come it is just for you to write laws for mortals,
while you yourself incur a charge of lawlessness?
[…]
For you do wrong in pursuing pleasure ahead of forethought.
It is no longer just [for you] to talk about bad men,
if we shall imitate Good of gods,
while you only teach us this.

For the boy who sees the divine order as a guide for the human order, the rape that the god conducts is unacceptable. The boy expects the god to seek ἀρεταί (*Ion* 440), since, if gods do things unjustly, human beings who *follow* the divine deeds will also do wrong.

Ion's expectation that the divine world and the human world should hold the same moral principle indicates a clear presupposition: the fundamental order of the two

worlds should be the same. However, such thinking fails to understand the fundamental difference between the two worlds, since one world is essentially an ordered world without morality (divine world), while another is a disordered world which needs morality (human world).[62] The maintaining of order is not necessarily the same as the pursuit of ἀρετή. In turn, an immoral world is also not necessarily a disorderly world. As the play has shown, the morality of Apollo is throughout ambiguous: he felt neither regretful nor ashamed (like Creusa) about his rape.[63] In this sense, to require the same moral virtue from the divine world can itself be troublesome.[64] With the development of the play, Ion's reflection becomes more significant. The unbridgeable gap between the two worlds manifests the questionable nature of autochthonous order in imitating divine order: first, as the two worlds are in essence incomparable, it is problematic for human beings to take the divine world as a model for imitation; second, as a result, to seek for a justification from the divine order for the establishment of the human order is also not as plausible as imagined.

To finally resolve this tragic tension of autochthony, the play concerning Athenian founding myth offers another founding myth as its ending. Athena appears, rescuing Apollo's almost-failed plan *again*,[65] and acts once more as the goddess Athena who endows the founding city with justification. Athena asked Ion to acknowledge the rape history of his biological parents, but to conceal it from Xuthus, his new father. Ion will go back to Athens with his Athenian parents Creusa and Xuthus while Apollo should be absent from then on. In this way, Ion could successfully return to Athens with an identity as the successor of autochthony and social order is once again established.

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[62] Ἀρετή is a moral concept which is only effective within the dimension of human society, in which judgment of good and bad, ethical and evil, right and wrong is needed. In the world where there is no such judgment there is no issue of morality.

[63] In the beginning of the play, Hermes' narrative does not show any emotional sympathy from Apollo. And at the end of the play, Athena merely says that Apollo has done everything right. Neither of them expresses any condemnation about Apollo's rape. Moreover, Apollo himself only plots Ion's return to Athens and is absent from the stage throughout the play. The reason for his absence is μὴ τῶν πάροιθε μέμψις ἐς μέσον μόλῃ (1558: for the sake of avoiding blame, not because of his guilt or shame).

[64] The discussion about morality and justice may be a key area where Euripides forms his conversation with Aeschylus.

[65] At the very last moment, Ion is still suspicious that Apollo is his father. Without Athena's confirmation, Apollo's plan would go wrong again. There are three major rescues for Apollo's original plan: the birds (1197-1206), the priestess (1320-21), Athena (1554).

This appears to be a rather happy ending where everyone has got what he or she wants, and thus seems a similar attempt at restoring order and bringing hope back to the stage as that in Aeschylus' play. However, as has been noticed by many scholars, Euripides is actually much harsher in his realism. This ending is full of compromises and can hardly be a real relief or a revival of the traditional autochthony.[66] The entire issue still lingers around the sexual pattern that has long troubled Greeks for centuries. What we see is that the interruption of the normal sexual relationship (birth from the two) by an additional third still causes a strong feeling of uneasiness. This additional third – be it Xuthus or Apollo – makes the entire situation so troublesome that the tension in the sexual relationship cannot be resolved. It is only with a *lie* that the sexual order and social order finally returns to a normal track. Only through the silence of Apollo and deception to Xuthus[67] is the normal Athenian identity of Ion finally gained with one mortal father *and* one mortal mother in human society.

After the long trip of trial and error of both "birth from the one" and "birth from the three", now Euripides' ending turns back to the "birth from the two". Athena for the first time praises the sexual union: Ξούθῳ δὲ καὶ σοὶ γίγνεται κοινὸν γένος. (*Ion* 1589: Xuthus and you [Creusa] shall bear a common child). This is obviously a challenge to the traditional autochthonous discourse. But, with this new founding myth, does Euripides finally justify the ever unfavourable sexual pattern? We can still hardly say so. It should never be forgotten that with a *lie* as the final resolution, a deep irony is indicated here. The cost of achieving social order in the real human world is significant: it must endow lies with justification, to acknowledge them, use them, and even accept them as the intrinsic nature of human life, since only with those lies could the darkness of human society be covered – even if it is only a temporary resolution. Indeed, with the deception, the new myth could guarantee the peace of the new family, comfort everyone's heart, form the basis of the history of origin, and make an attempt to reconcile the tension between the human world and the divine world. But the more we need these lies, the

[66] Saxonhouse (1986) 271, Goff (1988), Segal (1999) 96-97, Hoffer (1966) 307-8. Although Zeitlin [(1996) 298-99] and Loraux (1981) and have a more positive view towards the happy ending. Cf. Hunter (2011) 30. This issue is also related to the discussion about the *Ion* as New Comedy. On this discussion, see Zacharia (1995) with bibliography in note 3.

[67] Knox (1979) 68-69, Saxonhouse (1986) 271, Segal (1999) 97.

more we make these lies – be it a myth, a tale, or a story – the more we live in a big lie and the more life becomes an irony itself. This is forever a paradox.

And with such a view, we may be forced to face an even more irritating issue: if the new founding myth is a lie, how can one be sure that other myths that we have learned are not lies? What the ending of *Ion* – a founding myth but a lie – really leads to is a collapse of the belief in myths *per se*. In such a crisis, all the stories would make us suspect the truthfulness of their telling. It seems that, as long as we are in the human world where lies are ubiquitous, we cannot really judge whether those myths that we learn are true or not. This is a dramatic change that we can see from the time of Aeschylus to the time of Euripides. If half a century earlier, myth is still taken as a kind of true narrative to be believed and followed, now in the late 5th century, we see that the perception of myth has been challenged and was gradually changing. In the next chapter, some decades later, we will see that the entire mythic tradition, from its truthfulness to its way of thinking, was even more radically challenged. And the mythic lie that is pioneered by Euripides will become the very nature of myth: it is a lie, no matter how noble it can be.

III. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show tragedy's conversation with the civic discourse of autochthony. I chose Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Ion* as my case studies. I have tried to show that through a self-conscious reworking of the traditional narrative, both tragedians challenged this new mythic thinking that had become popular in classical Athens.

Their concerns appear to be similar although with different angles. The central question is whether autochthony as an imitation of the divine order can really work in a real human society. In regard to this issue, Aeschylus' reflections tend to be more restrictive. In his famous trilogy, he still presents a glorious picture of this civic discourse: autochthonous order could finally be established through a divine scheme in a traditional sense despite the long delay of its victory. But it is with this deliberate delay that Aeschylus shows the potential problem that such an imagination might have to face: although the order of autochthony is still plausible for the human world, its forced construction is revealed to be problematic with regard to the issue of social justice. In the long run of pursuing justice and maintaining order, continual dramatic conflicts show an increasing inconsistency between the two attempts.

The origin of this problem, as has been shown by Aeschylus, lies at the irresolvable tension between the nature of the human world as a dual-sexed society and its attempt to form a monistic order. The ontological denial of women in human society for the sake of social order necessarily leads to a break in the natural balance. Whether autochthony is still valuable for Athens appears to be ambiguous in Aeschylus' presentation. But even though the tragedian does not lose the hope of achieving such a monistic patriarchal order, all the conflicts, delays and additional efforts show how hard such an attempt could be.

When it comes to Euripides half a century later, such a conservative view became more problematic. For this younger thinker, autochthony cannot work in reality at all and the pure patriarchal order is doomed to be a failure precisely because of its inconsistency with human nature. This forms a different criticism from his predecessors. As I have attempted to show, although Euripides picks up Aeschylus' concern about the nature of human world as a sexual society, he goes deeper. He turns his eyes to the human-divine relationship, since the foundation of the autochthonous order is in essence rooted in the Athenian aspiration to establish human order by imitating the divine order. According to Euripides, as the human world is by nature different from the divine world, the order in the two realms could not be the same. Even though, as has been shown in the play, one could defend the autochthonous order in a forced way, such order could not keep its stability because the human world, unlike the divine world of Zeus, is by nature full of sexual desire, sexual procreation, dualistic opposition and sexual conflicts, all which make the control of sexual relationship not only hard but essentially impossible. Even if some kind of social order can really be established in such a world, it must depend on a lie, which is a necessary resolution to all the irresolvable tensions. This presentation of Euripides shows his questioning or even denial of the traditional autochthony.

Euripides' harsher challenge brings out another profound question: if the world of gods fails to provide us with a solid ground for social order, where can social justice and social order in human society obtain their justification? And how can the world of human beings – under such irreconcilable tension – really achieve a sense of order at all? These are difficult questions which neither the play of Aeschylus nor that of Euripides has answered, but which they have pushed the audience to think about.

Whereas the tragedians only call traditional thinking into question, 5th century' philosophers seem to have gone even further. On the issues of how to position human

beings in the world, how to perceive the cosmic, theological and mythic world, and how to establish a firm foundation for social order, philosophers not only attempted to challenge traditional thinking but also offer their own schemes for resolution. In the next chapter, we will look at one of their representatives: Plato. As we will see, his scheme is by no means traditional: it is as radical and incisive as it ever could be.

Chapter 4
Revolution of Philosophy:
Plato's New World Order and Revised Autochthony

Through the narrative of the tragedies we have already seen the critical issue regarding the idea of autochthony: being a construction of social order, this mythic thinking finds it very hard to be compatible with the nature of the human world as a sexual society. In the writing of Plato, we will see that this issue becomes a concern again. Like his older contemporaries, Plato also finds autochthony to be incapable of coping with human nature because of its intrinsic inconsistency with the human condition and thus to be a questionable mythic thinking on social order and social justice.[1] But besides this shared concern, the criticism of the philosopher appears to be much more radical. I will show that, whereas tragedians only criticize the mythic thought *within* the traditional mythic framework, Plato directly attacks this mythic framework *per se*. For him, without a substantial and thorough reconsideration of the entire mythic system, it would be impossible to resolve the tension between social order and social justice, human nature and divine order that has been indicated in the autochthonous myths.

This attempt of Plato has obviously gone beyond the criticism of a single myth and touches on the fundamental issues that are implied in mythic thinking, which develops his reflection on autochthony into a rethinking of the entire mythic system. Such a grander vision is of course closely related to the philosopher's overall concern about

[1] Autochthony as the central mythic theme is seen in *Republic* book 3, 5-7; *Timaeus.* 23e1ff; *Critias* 109d2ff; *Menexenus* 238e-239a; *Symposium* 189c-193d; *Statesman* 271a-274e; *Laws* Book 2, 663ff. It should especially be pointed out that the *Menexenus* is often taken by researchers as the most representative work of autochthony in Plato which presents a Platonic funeral oration with an indication of the indigenous idea of autochthony. While fully aware that there are multi-layered meanings of autochthony in classical Athens, I choose not to examine the *Menexenus* in this thesis as it is more related to the basic use of the term as an indigenous claim and its link to political discourse, without the mythic narrative on which it is based. Moreover, as a funeral oration, Plato's use and his reflection on autochthony in the *Menexenus* thus also only linger at the level of democratic politics and indigenous meaning. However, as we will see, a much deeper and more complete theory on autochthony as social myth is presented in Plato's trilogy *Republic-Critias-Timaeus*, which has been overlooked by previous studies. For interpretation of the *Menexenus*, see Loraux (2000), Saxonhouse (1995), Strijdom (2013), Pappas (2011), Shapiro (1998), Rosivach (1987).

mythology in the genre of philosophy.[2] As we have mentioned in the Introduction and as many scholars have also noted, in the new wave of the enlightenment of rationalism,[3] myth in the 5th century BCE gradually became a "problem and/or a target of criticism in both historiography and philosophy"[4], whose meaning was no longer just a kind of formulated speech in the domain of *legein* but something untrue or fabulous in opposition to *logos*. With the change of the conceptualization of myth, an overall rethinking about myth thus becomes necessary.[5] So we can see that in Plato, myth as a false way of presenting truth is deeply reflected and it is thought to be an untrue discourse, especially in the form of poem in contrast to philosophical dialectic.[6]

But besides this well discussed rationalism in Plato's philosophical agenda, another motivation which receives less attention in recent scholarship is actually equally important for Plato's criticism of *mythos* as a false telling: [7] the philosopher's dissatisfaction with traditional mythic thought *per se*. This aspect is also closely related to the larger context of contemporary reflection on the mythic tradition, but it goes even further than the view of philosophy and history. The dissatisfaction with the traditional mythic thought is in effect not an invention of Plato, as we have seen all the way from Hesiod to Euripides. Criticism and revision of mythic narrative all show a certain dissatisfaction with the mythic framework. Especially in the case of Euripides, we have seen that he has directly questioned the imagined divine world as well as the traditional

[2] It is imperative to note that my reference to "genre" here can be rather restrictive. Although philosophy – *philo-sophia*, loving wisdom – is taken as a category of writing form later, this genre has not been fixed with specific orthodox in 5th century BCE yet. Philosophy as a genre was still kept in debate in ancient Greece, and Plato is certainly one of the most prominent representatives of such a self-reflective thinking. So here by "philosophy" I mean Plato's philosophy.

[3] Guthrie (1962) Vol. III.

[4] Fowler (2011) 65. It is interesting to note that Fowler also points out that Plato's complicated stand on the issue is a reaction to Sophistic views, which can be a further support to our grander vision which takes Plato's criticism of myth as part of the intellectual history.

[5] On Plato's thinking on *mythos versus logos*, see also *Rep*. books 2-3 and book 10, *Ion*, *Gorg*. 505c10, 523a, *Phd*. 61b4, *Prot*. 320c*, Crat.* 408c*, Tim.* 26c and 26e4.

[6] For current discussion of Plato's dealing with poem and poets, see a good collection of essays by Destrée and Herrmann (2011).

[7] The *content* of those revised myths is more often dismissed owing to scholarly heavy attention to the functional and methodological side of Plato's myth. Trabattoni [(2012) 309] has a strong argument in dividing the issue of content from the issue of function of myth: "the interpretation of myths is of no interest to philosophy."

thinking concerning the divine-human relationship. And here Plato also participates in this significant conversation and becomes one of the challengers to such thinking.

But this philosopher, with his philosophical writing, goes even further. For Plato, the attempt to imitate the divine world itself should not be blamed – to appeal to divinity is actually good and necessary – but traditional understanding of *what* the *true* divinity is, *how* it could be followed, and what the *real nature* of human society is remain fundamentally problematic. As we have seen from the previous chapters, all the issues are centred on the fundamental nature of society as understood in mythic thinking. As the society is thought to be formed with a motivation of sexual desire and then sexual reproduction, social order from its beginning is problematic, because there is always an irreconcilable contrast between this formation pattern which necessarily leads to social change, even disorder, and the aim of establishing social order which requires unchanging stability. Even though the divine world is imagined to have finally realized a certain order, it is still a forced construction insofar as it suppresses the original force violently, which the real human world can never fully achieve. As long as the origin of society is thought to be disordered, and as long as the divine world is full of violence and turbulence – no matter whether the violence is used for subversion of suppression – the entire orientation of order-establishment in human society will always be problematic.

In response to such traditional thought, also in conversation with contemporary intellectuals who share similar concerns, Plato focuses his criticism precisely again on this central issue of sexuality. For Plato, in order to form a real social order for the human world, one should not follow the problematic traditional logic of social formation any more. As we can see in Plato's *Republic* book two, immediately before his revision of autochthony, this intention has already been explicitly expressed. The main point of Plato's Socrates' criticism of the traditional thinking of the divine world is that both the divine *eris* (*Rep.* 378a: Kronos vs Uranos, *Rep*. 378d: Hera vs Zeus) and the divine *eros* (*Rep*. 390e: Zeus' desire for Hera) will trigger further conflicts and a loss of control. For him, these stories are the worst part of the mythic tradition because, if they are imitated by young listeners who cannot recognize their deep meanings,[8] they could only make the

[8] It is interesting to note the rhetoric of Socrates in this passage: "even if they are true, I would not think they should be told to thoughtless youngsters in this light hearted way, but should be kept strictly quiet. And if there is some necessity…only a very small audience should be admitted…" (*Rep*. 378a). In fact, Socrates does not explicitly reject the idea that the poems might be able to convey truth but is concerned more about the way

society more chaotic and conflicted.[9] To change such a situation, gods must be absolutely good without any dispute with each other (*Rep*. 380a-d), and certainly should have no erotic desire that engenders troubles. Moving on to our case study of autochthony, we will see that the same idea continues: in the newly revised "charter myth", the so-called "noble lie", neither the divine world nor the human world is formed through sexual reproduction triggered by erotic desire. Instead, the new human society, which still follows divine instruction, is formed on an entirely different basis, according to which the human world becomes by nature an ordered society and so does the divine world. Starting from this point, Plato's revolutionary theories concerning sociology, theology and cosmology are constructed one by one.

Here we can see that myth gets told with a new reason. Now the myth is told not only for fun, for education or for exchange, but becomes a reflection of and a challenge to the tradition itself. Through keeping its traditional *function* but changing the *content*, Plato resituates the traditional autochthony for his own theory. From this perspective, myth for Plato is certainly more than just a functional institute which serves the higher goal of philosophy,[10] but is itself fundamental and necessary in his writing. Plato needs to

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they present it. I follow Strauss's view that "the genuine "quarrel between philosophy and poetry" (*Rep*. 607b5-6) concerns, from the philosopher's point of view, not the worth of poetry as such, but the order of rank of philosophy and poetry." [1964 (136)] This also indicates the possibility that, etymologically speaking, Platonic myth could be integrated into philosophy as a kind of *logos* of truth. On Socrates criticism of Homer/ Hesiod: cf. *Ion*. 535e-36d; *Phae*. 245a; *Laws* 719c. On Platonic myth as a medium for truth, see Rowe (2012) 197, Moors (1982), Brisson (1998) 109.

[9] Halliwell argues that Plato exhibits a more complex attitude towards poetry as both moral narrative and something for emotional pleasure, where Socrates does not banish poetry entirely even in his second critique in *Republic* Book X but reserves a place for a reconciliation between philosophy and poetry, or to put it more erotically, for philosophy's love for poetry. However, even if we take Halliwell's view on the philosopher's *eros* for poetry at the *psychological* level, Plato's great hesitation about the *content* of the traditional myth narrative by poets is explicit. Halliwell (2011a) and (2011b) ch.4.

[10] Some interpreters agree that Platonic myth, being integrated into philosophy, acts as a "vehicle" for intellect, and *mythos* becomes certain kind of *logos* since myth says, in Plato's writing, what is true. See Annas (1981), Moors (1982), see also Ferrari (2012), Collobert (2012) and the collection of essays in Partenie (2009). Others see the relationship between the two as more opposite than harmonious although they still acknowledge that Platonic myth is connected to the realm of philosophical probing. See, for example, Brisson (1998). Morgan (2000) attempts to find a middle but more sophisticated way to understand the relationship between *mythos* and *logos*, proposing that the two in effect dynamically interact with each other both at philosophical and linguistic level. For

use tradition to subvert the tradition. Here the stories change as the notion of story itself changes: *mythos* versus *logos*. From the perspective of history of intellectual thought, Plato's concern about the mythic tradition could be even more significant, as it not only presents dynamic interactions between myth and philosophy *with-in* Platonic theory but also offers us a grander picture *with-out* Plato where the philosopher and other intellectuals, both preceding and contemporary, are engaged in lively conversation. In this way, we see that the philosopher's thought is projected into the holistic map of Greek culture.

Now let us go into Plato's revision of autochthony. In this chapter, I choose the *Republic* to begin my discussion as it is the longest and most developed example of Plato's re-thinking of autochthony, and it is most embedded in his systematic philosophical project.[11] Then I will turn to *Timaeus* and *Critias*, two follow-up texts of the *Republic*, which open an even deeper discussion of autochthony as well as its intrinsic relation to the divine realm and the entire mythic system.[12] Starting with "birth from the soil" and

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Morgan, such interaction opens up more complex interrelation between myth, argument, history, history as myth, myth as history, and thus forges a new philosophical literary awareness of its own limitation. The similar view could also be seen in Murray (1999), Rowe (2012). Regarding to the function of myth in philosophy, different myths in different works are seen to be bearing different functions, such as persuasion (Rowe (2006) Brisson (1982)), education (Moore (2012), Avgousti (2012), Hooper (2010)) and philosophical quest (Trabattoni (2012)), but all of them are rooted in the new understanding of the notion of *mythos*.

[11] Of course, this case study does not go against autochthonous myths in other texts. Although in narrative, these myths seem to vary from case to case, from the very fundamental standpoint, all of them are consistent with each other with the common concern about sexuality, social order and social stability. Unitarianism could be said to be a common norm among ancient readers of Plato. This reading suggests that different works of Plato are concerned with the same issues but in different modes. The development theory comes later in modern criticism. Rowe [(2006) 15-16 and (2007a)], for example, argues the weakness of the development theory of Plato's works compared to the Unitarian reading. For discussion of the debate between unitarian and developmentalist, see Teloh (1981), Sedley (2004) 14-15, Prior (2012). See also Johansen, Sedley, Gill and El Murr in *The Platonic Art of Philosophy* (2013).

[12] There have been many discussions on the sequence *Republic-Timaeus-Critias* taking the three works as a dramatic whole. See for example Ausland (2000) esp. p. 193, Howland (1991), (2007), Owen (1953), Rosenmeyer (1956), Welliver (1977), Schironi (2005). Since we do not have the *Hermocrates*, which, for some scholars, is supposed to exist after the *Critias*, our discussion does not include this text for current purposes. For the proposal of a tetralogy, see discussion in Ausland (2000) and Howland (1991). Cf. Clay (1997).

going on to a full cosmology, Plato's reflection on autochthony is penetrating. The structure of Plato's mythic argument knows its myth.

I. Autochthony: Old Myth, New Order

The revised autochthony in the *Republic* (*Rep*. 414c-415c) is distinctive in Plato's writing. Socrates endows it with a rather special title: "noble lie" (414c: γενναῖον ψευδομένους). Of course, interpretations never lack debate over this phrase, concerning to what extent the discourse is a *pseudos* and how *gennaion* it is,[13] but no matter which reading of the γενναῖον ψευδομένους readers would like to take, one thing here is at least certain: such a combination of *pseudos* and *gennaion* indicates explicitly its uniqueness in being something untrue but something good, which makes the story naturally triggers the audience's curiosity: how can a false telling be good? What is the relationship between *pseudos* and *gennaion*? With such a provocative expression, Plato not only invites his audience to regard what he is going to tell with special respect, but also calls for readers' attention to this novel idea about both "being a lie" and at the same time "being noble".

Indeed, some work needs to be done to decipher this sophisticated phrase. What I would like to propose is that, through such a remarkable combination, Plato is actually indicating the significance of his following narrative: he will use a form of false telling (*pseudos*) to present something true or something noble (*gennaion*). If we still remember Plato's comments on *mythos* just a moment before the "noble lie" – "we tell children *mythoi* first. I think this means something false (*pseudos*) on the whole, but there can be truth (*alēthē*) in it" (*Rep*. 377a)—we would understand that what Plato means here is

[13] The word *gennaion* is generally accepted as 'noble'. Some scholars, however, propose different translations. Page [(1991) 21], for example, proposes "well-born" since there is a sense of impeccable. Schofield [(2007) 138] agrees with the translation "noble", but he also suggests "true-blue", meaning "a massive, no-doubt-about-it lie". In terms of *pseudos*, most scholars agree on the translation of "lie". Markovits [2010 (144)] argues from the point of myth that "the myth is a lie" [see also Brisson (1988)]. Bloom (1968) insists that the tale is a lie because the inhabitants of Socrates' city are to believe the untrue story to be true. But for some scholars, "lie" is too strong a term that can be problematic in the philosophical context. Therefore, Ferguson [(1981) 260] and Thomson [(1936) 32] prefer "fiction" as "it covers any statement describing events which never in fact occurred". See also Smith (1985). Cornford [(1941) 103] even proposes a more special translation: "a bold flight of invention". Indeed, it is hard to express the whole meaning of the γενναῖον ψευδομένους. The diverse translations of this term have indicated the complexity of the tale.

exactly the great moment that we just discussed above: when he will use the tradition (the form of *mythos*) to subvert the tradition (the thought of *mythos*). Since he has criticised the traditional myths as an untrue telling in a negative sense, now what he is going to narrate is a nobler scheme for mythic telling, which would change the previous difficult situation of myth to a better-off one, the one would not harm the youth anymore.

Let us now have a look at the revised myth. It was told by Socrates that, at that time, not only human beings but also weapons as well as other equipment were all formed and nurtured (*Rep*. 414d: πλαττόμενοι καὶ τρεφόμενοι) under the soil before the earth released them. Born from the earth, these human beings regard each other as brothers and defend the land as their mother. Even though they are born from the same land, the god put different kinds of metals – gold, silver, iron and bronze – into individual beings to produce different competencies so that once they are born, they would receive different honours according to their pre-determined abilities. Gold for governors has the highest capacity, then silver for auxiliaries, and iron and bronze for farmers and other artisans. In the next generation, children were to be born from human parents, i.e. gold gives birth to gold and silver to silver. But arbitrary change happens sometime.[14] If a gold happens to beget a silver by nature (*Rep*. 415c: τὴν τῇ φύσει προσήκουσαν τιμὴν), the child would be sent to the lower level; if on the contrary, a bronze begets a gold, the child would also be upgraded. In this way, every single person is assigned a proper place according to their natural capacity without dispute and thus an orderly social system is formed.

This is a comprehensive picture of an establishment of social order with a clear reference to traditional myths but also an explicit change of the old ones. As we can see, centred on the birth "from the earth", this narrative is explicitly an autochthonous-related story. And also because of its feature as a "charter myth", this newly narrated tale is thus comparable with the popular autochthony in Athens. However, except for the very element that the citizens are autochthonous, readers might have already sensed that this "noble lie" is so different from the traditional ones that it can be almost regarded as a new

[14] Plato reserves the possibility of "cause of necessity" and is also ambiguous about the reason of change, leaving it to the imagination. This point is especially important when it is put into the context of Plato's cosmology in the *Timaeus* where human society is imperfect by nature and thus the "cause of necessity" is one of fundamental features of human world. This also supports our reading of *Republic*-*Timaeus*-*Critias* as consecutive work of trilogy. See my discussion in section 3.

story. Not only are all of the pre-birth divine actions entirely absent from Plato's version, but also the earth-birth itself is significantly changed. It is purely an "autochthony", even purer than the birth of Erichthonius: all the children here are nurtured and born straightforwardly from the earth, without any other agents as potential parents at all. The gods indeed appear in the story, something which makes this autochthony divinely oriented, but these gods have never been involved in any process of procreation – even partially – and their only work is to put different features into the earth-born children.

Why does the revision happen in this way? I would like to argue that Plato makes these changes precisely in order to target the central issue that he has just criticized in book two. As we mentioned above, for Plato, the worst thing in traditional myths is the unavoidable *eros* which causes endless changes and social disorder. If a society is to be ordered from its root, its origin should be exempt from the influence of this power from the very beginning. Only by removing the erotic desire from the procreation pattern can the essential problem in the traditional mythic thinking be decisively tackled. This is what Plato intends to do here in his myth: whereas in the traditional narrative, sexual reproduction occupies the central concern – no matter whether it finally ends in birth from one, two or three – he deliberately removes the entire issue of sexuality from his birth story and makes it a topic no longer to be concerned about at all. The absence of all the sexual activities as well as sexual parents enables these purely earth-born children to be free from the troublesome sexual pattern from the very beginning and, in this way, *eros* is excluded from the origin of society.

Although the myth is still autochthony, the entire foundation of the social formation has been decisively changed. It becomes a purely asexual reproductive society. And since the children are born without any involvement of sexual desire or erotic passion, the entire birth is able to be absolutely rational. There is no sexual conflict nor any forced suppression or violation that is normally seen in the common sexual pattern, not even a possibility of it. The whole point of the myth no longer indulges in the issue of procreation but rather aims directly at the order of society from its very origin. Indeed, the society is ordered at its foundation. As we know from the second part of the myth,[15]

[15] While some scholars take the second part of the "noble lie" separately as another story referring to Hesiod's metal myth, I shall suggest that it should be taken as part of the coherent story, although it indeed echoes Hesiod's tale. The coherence of the two parts is first of all stated clearly by Socrates himself. After Socrates narrates the first part, Glaucon rushes to conclude that Socrates indeed has a reason to be reluctant to tell the myth;

based on the new reference standard of natural intelligence, the so-called metallic value (*Rep*. 456a), the newly formed society is endowed with *a naturally hierarchical system*, in which all men are supposed to do their own work according to their different mental nature without any transgression.[16]

The social order presented in the "noble lie" is no doubt revolutionary.[17] It not only alters the original meanings of the traditional myths, but, more importantly, by removing the sexual pattern from social origin, it makes a great effort to redefine the

however, Socrates asks him to wait, not to be so pressed to bring a conclusion to his narrative but – "nevertheless" (ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως) – "listen to the rest of the story" (ἄκουε καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν τοῦ μύθου). He is not thinking of a second story but a remaining part of the narrative – the metal beings are earth-born men and they are the sole subject of the revised autochthony. On the different function of the "two myths", see Hyland (1988) 328, Benardete (1992) 76-78, Carmola (2003), Schofield (2007), Williams (2013). Cf. Van Noorden (2009).

[16] There are substantial studies on Plato's ideas about 'moderation' (*sophrosyne*) and 'agreement' (*homonoia*) among the three parts of the soul at both cognitive and psychosocial levels; they largely help to justify the collective friendship (*philia*) in his ideal society so that the hierarchical classes can work together without tension or transgression. Although for me the display of the essential structural difference between Plato's autochthony and the traditional thinking is more crucial for the theme of this chapter, an understanding of the topics that I mentioned above will enrich my relatively simplified presentation of the framework of Plato's social structure. For the current purpose, I will not dive into the endless discussions on the relations between city and soul, happiness and justice, as well as psychology and sociology, but still would like to highlight the importance of such topics for Plato's sociology. For detailed discussion, see for example Cornford (1941), Neu (1971), Vlastos (1969), Williams (2001), Kamtekar (2004), Ferrari (2005), Scholfield (2006), (2010), Burnyeat (2006), Barney (2008), Roochnik (2008), Ober (2009), and more recent El Murr (2014), Wilberding (2012) Petraki (2011), Prauscello (2014).

[17] The revolutionary feature of the "noble lie" has long been in dispute. It is never free from attack. Popper's camp accuses Plato of totalitarianism and thereby sees him as a tyrant. See Popper (1952), Crossman (1939) 130, Fite (1934) 29, Emerson (1944) 417, and Ferguson (1981) 259-6. Rawl's camp alleges that, in telling the lie, Plato allows the rulers to manipulate and control others, thereby facing a problem of political Liberalism. See Rawls (1971) 454, Annas (1981) 167, Bok (1978) 169-70, cf. Williams (2013). Other scholars, led by Strauss, defend the "noble lie" as a "beautiful falsehood" for the majority and deny the political violence of this tale. See Strauss (1964, 1972, 1983), Bloom (1968), Kayser (1973), Page (1991), Bernadete (1992), Pangle (1992) 210-11, Rosen (2005), cf. Lear (2006), Hyland (1988), Schofield (2007). No matter which camp, readings above all tend to be so political that they miss the deeper intention of this narrative. My interpretation otherwise attempts to go beyond the political reading and look at the theoretical seriousness of the myth. The significance of the myth, as we have discussed, must have extended beyond the mythic narrative of the "noble lie" itself, and is linked to the larger theme of the entire work.

essence of society which would decisively subvert the traditional understanding of social formation.[18] As we have seen in previous chapters, the traditional view of social division is fundamentally formed by the two antithetical sexes in a *horizontal* sense,[19] and its wish of establishing a hierarchical order of the sexual society like that of the divine world can only be attempted with a constructive effort *a posteriori* (and this attempt – autochthony and its patriarchal order – has been criticized as a failure). By contrast, what is crucial in Socrates' myth is that, without such an antithetical sexual relationship, the new society becomes otherwise a hierarchical society *a priori*. It is naturally a *vertical* division based on ranked merit of innate intelligence and requires no artificial construction.[20] Through the symbolic birth from the earth, the real point in this myth is expressed explicitly: social order should be formed based on intellectual nature instead of sexuality. Intelligence replaces gender.

The myth is completed but new issues arise immediately. As Socrates himself is fully aware, his story to the new citizens in the ideal city is after all a kind of false telling

[18] There could be, of course, multiple indications in this new "charter myth" [Schofield (2007) 139], such as patriotic harmony, filial loyalty, political persuasion etc., as has been proposed by most of the mainstream readings. For the patriotic reading, see Bok (1978) 167, 135, Hyland (1988) 328, Benardete (1992) 76-78, Barnes (1994), 83, 136, Schofield (2007). For reading on political persuasion (and manipulation), see my note 17. However, we should not take this story merely as a political founding myth but should notice Plato's deeper considerations in his social theory. What is the most significant and radical in this myth is Socrates' proposal of the thorough reconstruction of the social framework, his resolution to sexual relationship and his challenge to the essential concepts of human nature, social justice and social order. Socrates, in revising autochthony, aims at laying a solid foundation for the construction of the ideal city, which depends on his reform of the traditional society.

[19] On the traditional perception of social formation, see my discussion in chapters 1 to 3. The essential nature of the human world is a dual-sexed society in which men and women have an equally ontological power of living. To say "the very nature of human society", I mean the basic condition of sexual opposition that has been shown in archaic tradition. All the attempts in later periods, such as autochthony, are man-made effort to overcome this tragically natural condition.

[20] Hammond (2008) attempts to propose a sense of equality in this myth in that, although the autochthonous birth here structures a hierarchy for the political *polis*, "it is not a defence for the hierarchy for its own sake" (p. 241) but leaves a space for the equality of the common birth that is shared by all classes by nature. Although I stress more the hierarchical feature of such a social formation, Hammond's argument with an emphasis on the common basis of the natural birth could support my reading in another way: it is exactly because the hierarchy is based on human nature *a priori* that Plato's social order can be claimed to be naturally just without a pre-established condition. Social fluidity is also made possible through a confirmation of the natural birth.

– a *pseudos*, an imagined fable that is not real, even if there is something true in it. Everyone would have to admit that, in the real human world, sexual procreation is the only real way of social formation, and the earth-born reproduction can only be a metaphorical telling. If what is proposed in this *pseudos gennaion* is true, and if the social order it presents can really be realized – not in a metaphorical but in a practical way – sexuality and women *per se* may no longer be overlooked. Therefore, after book 4, which deals with social justice as a consistent principle with the "noble lie", Socrates' discussion naturally turns to the issue of gender and sexuality. If social order and social justice are to be constructed properly, gender, and especially the nature of women, must be addressed with great care. This is why, after the proposal of the new autochthony, a long intervention (book 5-7) is inserted[21] and we see that this intervention is caused by the troublesome issue of gender.

Women and sexuality are the first and foremost point to be discussed in the "three waves". Socrates says bluntly, "having completely finished the male drama, now it would be right to complete the female drama" (*Rep*. 451c),[22] – as a necessary part of the order of the revised autochthony, women have to be observed on stage. In the next section, we shall see that the social role of women and the nature of gender are interrogated thoroughly. This attempt is a necessary result of the newly-constructed social order and also a prominent embodiment of such a construction.

II. Here Waves Come

Since in the "noble lie", intelligence is thought to be the only reference for social stratification, now in the sexual society, if this logic is still to be valid, the antithetical gap between the two sexes must be bridged so that sexuality will not again become a major force for social division. As we will see, this is the overall goal of Plato in the three waves, and he has made a great effort to secure intellectual stratification as the primary standard even in the real sexual society.

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[21] Roochnik (2008) 59.

[22] The importance of the gender issue and its offensive feature are shown in this deliberate terming of the "female drama". Bloom (1968) insightfully points out that this term is alluding to Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* which, through laughter, also deals with the issues of gender and sexuality. Rosen [(2005) 171] suggests: "Since it is more difficult to be angry when one is laughing, Socrates tries to blunt the offensive aspects of his proposal about women by beginning with its humorous side." See also Murray (2011).

The stratagem that Plato adopts is that he *degrades* the significance of sexuality. He proposes an elimination of the differences between the two sexes and thereby men and women are integrated indistinctively into the social framework without the traditional division (*Rep*. 451e: ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἐπὶ ταὐτὰ χρησόμεθα καὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσι. "We are to use the women for the same things as the men). In equalizing women and men in the same class of guardians,[23] what is only hinted in the noble lie is now explicitly stated: as long as they have the same intelligence, men and women should be equal, doing the same job and receiving the same training as a unity in one stratification (*Rep*. 451e).

We just mentioned that the great difficulty of the gender issue is that the traditional division of two sexes is based on "human nature", which seems to be unchallengeable. Unless this very basic nature is questioned, such ground is hard to be shaken. In order to break utterly the well-established gender order, Socrates' reform must trace its route back to the very origin of its construction, that is, the definition of gender, the concept of sexuality and the nature of men and women. Therefore, it would not be surprising for us to see that, in the discussion of women, Socrates explores the nature of human beings and redefines the meaning of being a man/woman. In his proposal, the equalization of men and women is not only in term of social status but also of their very nature. The reason for this is rooted in the concept of human nature: men and women actually share common natural attributes (*Rep*. 452e-453a).[24]

Although Socrates does not reject all differences between the sexes, he asks people to reconsider what is the most *essential* difference between individuals and how to divide

[23] It is noticeable that in the reconstruction of the ideal social structure, only the class of guardians (and maybe auxiliaries) is considered. Plato's exclusive focus on the single class and the fact that he ignores the third class (farmers, etc.) may invite criticism for its lack of consideration of the majority. However, I would argue that such a restriction is necessary and predictable. The ideal order can only be conducted within the first class, since such order relies entirely on the maturity and capacity of intelligence and must be under the condition of philosophical education, proper knowledge and self-willed obedience. The intelligent guardian class offers an opportunity to realize Socrates' revolutionary theory and to achieve the ideal conditions (stable, order and united); for the majority, Socrates has maintained the traditional social structure and left a space for disorder in this class. For Socrates, the most important part of the *polis* must be the leading class which, in the parallel of individual and city, like the soul, governs the less well-ordered part.

[24] On woman's ability and social function, cf. *Rep.* 395e, 431b-c, 605c-e; *Tim*. 42b-e, 90e-91a; *Laws.* 781aff.

people *properly* into categories through their nature.[25] To put the question more straightforwardly: what is the basic – and the most crucial – nature for social division; is it the gender or something else? Socrates argues that what is really decisive for the division is the nature of the intellectual soul instead of biological sexuality. He raises the rather humorous example of bald men and asks "whether bald shoemakers share the same nature with the longhaired shoemakers" (*Rep*. 454c). We all know that for this absurd (*Rep*. 454c: γελοῖον) question the only plausible answer is yes. And based on this, Socrates continues, as gender is only a biological difference between people (the female bears and the male mounts), just like the physical difference between the bald and the longhaired, there is no reason to take the former as more significant than the latter.

No matter how ridiculous this rhetoric is, we should not overlook its seriousness. As many scholars have noticed, what Socrates attempts to do here is to make soul prior to body, which means that Socrates' society is first and foremost a metaphysical society rather than a physical society. But I will add one point to this reading: such a change marks a significant difference from the Hesiodic tradition, according to which the world is thought to be essentially a material entity generated by way of sexual procreation. As the fundamental basis for human (and social) nature changes, a new principle for social division is formed: by decreasing the significance of biological sexuality, Plato makes it merely a secondary category among all other physical features so that another more fundamental category can be promoted. In this reconstruction, the difference between the male and the female is forcibly limited. The original horizontal stratification based on biological sexuality is replaced by vertical stratification based on intellectual capacity. As men and women are now regarded as the same species in the same category – although the female is generally weaker than the male (*Rep*. 451e) – they are automatically mixed into the same class, just like the bald and the longhaired. Now they can effectively form a unity without the traditional pattern of division. Now what is indicated in the "noble lie" applies to the entire sexual society.

[25] *Rep.*454b: ἐπεσκεψάμεθα δὲ οὐδ' ὁπῃοῦν τί εἶδος τὸ τῆς ἑτέρας τε καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως καὶ πρὸς τί τεῖνον ὡριζόμεθα τότε, ὅτε τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα ἄλλῃ φύσει ἄλλα, τῇ δὲ αὐτῇ τὰ αὐτὰ ἀπεδίδομεν. "We did not delay to consider at all what particular kind of difference and sameness of nature we had in mind and what was our aim in reaching a definition when we assigned different tasks to different natures, and the same tasks to the same nature." Edit. and Trans. by Emlyn-Jones and Preddy (2013).

In this way, the difference among human beings is shifted: it is primarily the vertical classes of intelligence rather than horizontal classes of sexual being. This means that if someone is to identify himself/herself in the context of social formation, the first identification must be his/her working function instead of sexual identity, although the latter still exists. For example, a female guardian would identify herself primarily as a guardian instead of a woman and a male shoemaker would also identify himself primarily as a shoemaker instead of a man. Socrates is ambitious. He has not only redefined men and women, but also has fundamentally changed the *definition* of human nature.[26] By emphasizing the significance of the soul and intelligence, the fundamental principle for social organization is thus decisively turned to hierarchical stratification. In a more straightforward way, the foundation for social order is shifted from physical body to intellectual soul, which refers again to the ranked metallic capacity in the revised autochthony.[27]

The equalization of women and men in this section has been a battlefield for feminism since the 1970s.[28] On this issue, interpretations are rather polarized, either praising Plato as a political hero emancipating women or accusing him of having mercilessly "murdered" women.[29] The opposition between these readings also comes

[26] Cf. Brisson (2012b), Taylor (2012), Folch (2015) ch. 3, Townsend (2017).

[27] Cf. The city's justice consists in each class performing its proper function according to their intellectual *nature* (*Rep*. 433a: ὅτι ἕνα ἕκαστον ἓν δέοι ἐπιτηδεύειν τῶν περὶ τὴν πόλιν, εἰς ὃ αὑτοῦ ἡ φύσις ἐπιτηδειοτάτη πεφυκυῖα εἴη.). It should be noted that in the *Republic* book 2 there is another horizontal structure proposed in the city of pigs, which does invoke the "each does his own job according to natural endowment" rule and initially generates an egalitarian city of craftsmen each sharing his skills. However, this is not contrary to the hierarchical order established here, as the city of pigs is only a deficient scheme, lacking the material things that characterize aristocratic life; the ethics and morality come later. The real point of Plato's hierarchical order is certainly his later introduction of philosopher kings. And in this society, ability and intelligence is not taken equally but with a distinct hierarchical order. Therefore, the city of pigs is only a "pre-scheme" that Plato prepares for the ideal city.

[28] As pointed out by Bluestone (1987), "scholarship on Plato's sexual equality is full of bias and is always written under social context." From the ignorance of gender issues (1800s) to denial of them (1900s) and finally to the fierce debate with the rise of feminism (1970-80s), the reading of Plato's work experienced a dramatic change.

[29] Saxonhouse argues that "in order to create the unified city, Socrates must destroy the female as female" [(1976) 48], and that this is a "figurative murder of the female in the quest for the city that is supposed to exist according to nature" [(1995) 148]. See also Canto (1985) 344, Lange (1979) 3-5, Nettleship (1967) 173. A milder idea is proposed by Rosenstock [(1994) 381] that Socrates aims to "undo" the women, making them into "masculinized women". For an opposite view, see especially Bluestone (1987) 98, who

from the controversial inconsistency of Plato's propositions that men and women should be treated equally on the one hand but that in general the female is weaker than the male on the other hand.[30] But no matter whether the debate focus on equality or inferiority, the status of women in Socrates' ideal city always swings between the two in the framework of feminism.[31]

Indeed, some other scholars have tried to extract their readings from this theoretical framework, but most of their strategies tend to obscure the targeted points while avoiding a solution to the real problem. Strauss and Bloom, for example, regard this section simply as a joke and skip the seriousness of the gender issue.[32] However, the lengthy discussion of women and sexuality in the text makes it hard to believe that it is simply something to be laughed at, as has been argued by many scholars of feminism. But those readings related to feminism – be they positive or negative – may also have made an incorrect attempt to reconstruct Plato's intent from a modern point of view.

What most of the previous readings have overlooked is the redefinition of the nature of *both* men *and* women. As we have noted above, men and women in Socrates' narrative are in fact no longer men and women in a traditional sense but new human beings with intellectual features. This shifted idea calls for a revolutionary view point on the *definition* of women – and men – *per se*. Thus neither the equalization of the two sexes

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responds to Saxonhouse's argument. See also Okin (1977) 345-64, Tuana (1994). For more recent reflections on the feminist reading on Plato, see Brisson (2012b).

[30] On the debate about Plato's feminism, Lefkowitz [(1989) 484] has presented a good bibliography. The debate focuses on how much equality the women in the *Republic* are granted. In the party where equality is to some degree acknowledged, some scholars, such as Olugbade (1989), argue that Plato indeed revolutionarily proposes the equality of women. Some less certain readers such as Mill [(1970) 100] would argue that there might be no space for women as a class but that individual women can achieve equal status as men. But at this level, Bluestone (1987) and Tylor (1956) argue the other way around, i.e. that the liberation of women comes at the cost of the personal sphere. There are some other commentators who also admit equality, but for them women and men are essentially different. Cf. Shorey (1965) 225, Koyré (1945) 76. On the other hand, scholars such as Coole [(1988) 3] deny any real equality for women, because "emancipated women are … [women] who approximate the male norm". See also Nettleship (1967). Scholars, such as Okin (1977), deny Plato's sincerity in equalizing men and women, taking it only as a forced result of the abolition of family. Cf. Jacobs (1978).

[31] Annas [(1976) 307] attempts to go against the feminist reading by arguing that Plato's proposals are unacceptable to modern feminism and thereby are not relevant to contemporary debate. But her argument is still entangled in its large framework. See also Wender (1973) 75-90, Taylor (2012).

[32] Strauss (1964), Bloom (1968).

nor the inferiority of women is primarily an issue of social status as scholars commonly believe, but rather a rethinking of human nature. Therefore, in fact, there is no inconsistency between the equality and the inferiority: the fundamental natures of the two genders are identical while the difference is only a matter of degree, not of category.[33] It should be noted that Socrates indeed has a much deeper view of sexuality, and a proper treatment of the existing female as a "species" is only his starting point. One question may still remain: why does Socrates after all still maintain the difference between men and women and admit some kind of inferiority of women?[34] Socrates does not offer an immediate answer here. But as we will see later in the next section, there is a clear reason for such an argument. We shall return to this point in a moment.

At this stage, we should note that the proposal in the "first wave" is a significant foundation in the construction of Socrates' "autochthonous" society. By neglecting physical difference and only emphasizing intellectual character, the "first wave" not only eliminates the contrast between the sexes but also – and more importantly – attempts to wipe out all the various differences in body, be they tall or short, bald or longhaired, masculine or feminine. In other words, all the physical beings become the same and are equal physical units which, if without the consideration of intelligence, can be counted with number: one, two and three. So the "first wave" has more profound meaning than just a female drama. As we will see later, it is this fundamental geometrical feature that plays an essential role throughout Socrates' grand project: it forms the basis of the pure hierarchical order of intelligence indicated in the "noble lie". But, for the moment, one problem still needs to be dealt with: even if women and men are naturally equal with each other in the same class, the sexual relationship is still the basic foundation of society when it comes to sexual procreation and the formation of a family. The persistence of society seems to be naturally contrary to Socrates' degradation of sexuality into a secondary category. In this sense, a discussion of wives, children and family is not only necessary but also urgent.

Here comes the "second wave". In securing the newly-established order, Socrates now deals with the issue of the sexual relationship directly. He suggests that not only

[33] Cf. Okin (1977) 358, Shorey (1965) 225, Koyré (1945) 76.
[34] On the inferiority of women, cf. *Rep*. 469d, 395c, 397c; *Apo*. 35; *Tim*. 42b-c; *Laws.* 789e-781b.

property should be held in common but also that wives and children should be shared within the governor class. This leads to an abolition of the nuclear family.

What does such an arrangement mean? This proposal is often called communism by interpreters – whether they reject or defend it.[35] Scholars suggest that by breaking down all the barriers of privacy, this "communism" forms a "high degree of cohesion and unity".[36] However, even if the guardian class is described as a unified community, its basis is not the communal sharing as usually proposed in the theory of communism.[37] Although the class of guardians all live together, this does not necessarily mean that anyone can get a share of anything that he/she desires. Instead of allowing men and women to live at their own will, Socrates installs a rather strict rule for the so-called communal life. Wives (or husbands) are "arranged" (*Rep*. 458b: διατάξουσιν) by eminent rulers to have intercourse with their partners. Since they are appointed and coupled in a rational and counted way regardless of their personal preference,[38] the relationship of the two sexes is *geometrical* (*Rep*. 458d: γεωμετρικαῖς) *without any erotic sense*.[39]

Plato's central concern about the tension between desire and stability comes back in this second wave again. The absence of sexual desire in sexual reproduction is certainly significant, since all that Socrates is trying to do with the sexual relationship here is to remove the most fundamental nature of human society for the sake of stability. Without desire, the entire logic of sexual reproduction is interrupted: the child is no longer born

[35] On the communism reading, see Strauss (1964) 114-127, Bloom (1968), Benardete (1992) 78, 110-20, Rosen (2005) 171-73, Ludwig (2007), Badiou (2012).
[36] Okin (1977) 355.
[37] Here I share the argument with Taylor (1956) 276 that "there is really neither socialism nor communism to be found in the work". However, I will argue that it is also problematic in Taylor's suggestion to take "the economic organization of the ideal city of the *Republic*" as "definitely 'individualistic'" (277).
[38] The crime of incest that worries Rosen [(2005) 179] and Saxonhouse [(1995) 14] would never happen in Socrates' ideal community since, firstly, the relationship between people has been fundamentally changed – there is no real *moral* concept of incest which is based on distinguishable relationships; and secondly, the new order is preconditioned by the rule of a philosopher-king who could arrange sexual intercourse geometrically and rationally.
[39] There is no room for personal erotic desire not only because *eros* makes men and women different from each other but also because personal emotion allows individuals to form a sense of attachment, which is against the idea of indiscriminate geometrical order. But whether such an ideal state can be realized is another issue. On the discussion of *eros*, see Grube (1935) 270, Taylor (1956) 278, Strauss (1964) 111-18, 138, Bloom (1968), Rosen (2005) 186-87, Hyland (1988) 322-33, Benardete (1992) 113, Ludwig (2007).

from unpredictable erotic combination and all births can be rationally controlled, even if this is in a real human world instead of the imagined earth-born society. As we see in the proposal, there is no fixed sexual relationship nor a long term one. All the sexual activities are conducted according to a mathematically designed plan. Everyone – the male and the female – in the activity is independent, and since the partner can be replaced within the same intellectual scope, in theory, it is not even necessary for the couples to recognize their partner's identities at all. They are basically individuals and their bodies are rather like indiscriminate units or numbers to be combined, structured, grouped and separated according to the best interest of the city. The major threat of desire to social order is now removed and what remains is only a passionless combination.

This atomized arrangement lays the foundation for the next radical step: the abolition of family. When children are born, they are raised in common so that all parents share all children and all children share all parents. Without the binding through offspring, any sexual relationship is able to be as temporary as possible: it only lasts for a very short period of time (in the process of fertilization) for a precisely targeted purpose (only for procreation, not for erotic desire). In an extreme sense, such a temporary combination cannot be called a proper sexual relationship: it is just a rational mission, and a short one.

The elimination of the nuclear family which is based on the fixed structure of "one man - one woman - private children" now makes sense. When all the familial attachments become loose and dispersed, the sexual relationship is no longer the foundation for the formation of society, nor is it of family. Now not only sexual couples but also the originally private production – *the* child of *that* couple – no longer exist. There shall not be a Xuthus or a Delphi girl any more. They all become, in a radical sense, atoms without specific individual connection. Now the entire traditional social framework is broken and the atomization of individual persons offers a solid ground for the *re*-construction of a new social structure, the social order of intelligence. In this sense, there seems to be no more significant difference between the mythic earth-born procreation and the sexual procreation in the real human world. Sexual society becomes truly autochthonous.[40]

[40] Plato not only deliberately eliminates *eros* in social origin – it is missing in the entire *Republic* as a force of social formation – but also, as has been pointed out by Rosen [(1965) 457], he denigrates *eros* by identifying it as the principle of tyranny in Book 9. See *Rep*. 573b6, 574d8, 575a3, 576b, 579d5-8. On the role of *eros* in the *Republic*, Rosen makes an insightful investigation that *eros* is more connected to the attribution of philosopher as a

At this point Socrates proposes again the metallic principle with which he has familiarized his audience: "the best men should have intercourse as often as possible with the best women", while "for the men and women of lower status, it is the reverse" (*Rep*. 459e). Intellectual goodness is the only reference for the grouping of people, and this primary category is now applied in sexual combination. The gold is born from the gold – if we remember this prominent phrase in the "noble lie". Plato's ideal social order is finally secured: it is a society solely based on intellectual capacity instead of sexuality. Gender order is transformed into intellectual order.[41] His reconstruction and repair work could thus be said to be completed.

Bloom argues that Plato in his construction has forgotten the body, as the physical differences between human have been removed.[42] Although he is right in the second half, his argument has pushed too far in the first half. In fact, Plato has not forgotten the body. He only transforms those bodies into mathematical units – physical being still matters. What is really crucial in this change is actually not to make the society bodiless, but, with a geometrical order, to make the entire society desire-free and thus controllable. Indeed, Aristotle has a good reason to worry that this scheme may lead to an extreme individualism,[43] as extreme equality with the idea of indiscriminate units may well scale down individual responsibility with the result that no one would really care about the benefit of the community. However, he may have misunderstood Plato on this point, since the community is not in essence entirely atomized but relies on the "eminent rulers" who take care of the entire arrangement (*Rep*. 458c). If the guardians all acknowledge such an arrangement and agree that following the rule is "both useful and beneficial" (*Rep*. 457d), they would act justly and properly, i.e. spare no effort to do the work which is suitable for him/her. So it is this *higher ruler* as well as the *self-willed obeying* that prevent the ideal community from corruption.[44] Therefore, if this condition is to be realized, concern

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kind of tyranny, which supports my argument that, in Plato's theory for common citizens in the city, passionate *eros* is too dangerous to be obtained. On the work of *eros* in the *Republic*, See also Ludwig (2007) 209-24, and recent study of Frank (2018).

[41] The best example is offered by Plato's deliberate emphasize the gender of many female philosophers in his works. On the parallel of philosopher and women to politics, see Saxonhouse (1976).

[42] Bloom (1968) 382. See Strauss (1964) 109: "abstracting body".

[43] *Politics* II. I262a33.

[44] This is also why the ideal social structure could only be expected within the class of guardians. See my note 23.

focuses on the following question: why should the guardians follow the rule? In other words, why should this social order be kept? What is the justification for it? These are questions that Plato must respond to if he is going to set up a new authority for social justification.

The answer to this question, if we put it simply, is this: it is in accordance with the rule of the rulers, i.e. philosopher-kings.[45] In the "third wave", the close connections between the first two "waves" and the appointment of rulers is clearly stated by Socrates himself (*Rep*. 502d-e).[46] According to Socrates, if such social order is to be realized – although this is difficult, it is not impossible (*Rep*. 499c-d) – the rule of the philosophers is a necessary condition. This is because only philosophers can maintain the real order of the ideal society. They love wisdom (*Rep*. 475b-e) and thus pursue eternal stability in the real world of truth (*Rep*. 485b-c). The real world, according to Socrates, is a realm which is *divine* and *orderly* (θείῳ δὴ καὶ κοσμίῳ), regulated and always internally consistent. Through learning and *imitating* (*Rep*. 500c: μιμεῖσθαι) the *world of truth*, society under the rule of philosophers can also achieve a certain order like the divine (*Rep*.500c-d), enjoying peaceful stability and unity. This is why the citizens, if they truly understand such benefits, should certainly follow the rule.

The core concept of "imitation" in autochthony appears here again.[47] While in traditional discourse of autochthony the human world attempts to establish a stable order through imitating the supreme order of Zeus, in the revised autochthony here the ideal city also attempts to maintain its order by imitating a divine world – but a different one. This parallel structure brings our attention back to Plato's concern of autochthony and the mythic tradition in which it is embedded. The fundamental issue remains the same: in order to justify principles of social order, a higher authority must be invoked. As we have noted above, since traditional autochthony fails to justify its social order by imitating the traditional divine world, the revised autochthony must seek another agent so that a proper connection can be made. This is the most crucial step for Socrates' revolutionary proposal of social order, since, as we have argued above, without a solid justification the foundation of the order cannot be securely established. Therefore, the

[45] *Rep.*471c-e: "If all those things in the new political system were to be realized, the rule of a philosopher-king based on the noble lie is an essential condition."
[46] *Rep.*502e: "The question of women and children has been dealt with, but we must go in search of the rulers more or less from the beginning".
[47] See my discussion in Chapter 2.

concern for the ideal city *naturally* and *necessarily* moves from the human realm to the grander and higher realm.

But this movement is not easy. To appeal to a new justification means that the traditional agent, i.e. the divine world of gods, shall inevitably be challenged. How dangerous the revolution is! Such a proposal is nothing but a *forced subversion* of the very root of the entire tradition, from the heaven to the earth. Plato's Socrates is indeed extremely reluctant to speak about it (*Rep*. 472a), as he foresees the risk of being accused of profanity. For current purposes, we will not delve into more detailed discussion of Socrates' religious belief, which is always an object of dispute; with the consideration of autochthony, it has been sufficient for us to see how radical and intricate Plato's social theory can be.

What, then, is the divine world that Socrates has in mind? We are told that "the Form of Good is the most important thing to learn, in relation to which just and other such terms become useful and beneficial" (*Rep*. 505a). The construction of society and the exercise of rulership thus become intrinsically subject to the metaphysical world of Forms, and this new divinity is supposed to support the well-being of the established order. Therefore, as we see, throughout the entire "third wave" (Books 5-7), investigation of the world of Forms occupies Socrates' attention.

However, from here a more complicated issue approaches: if the new proposed "world of Forms" becomes the divine world, what should people do with the traditional divine world of gods *and* how should people perceive the origin of the cosmos which was previously narrated to be co-occurrent with the generation of gods? It seems that, with the presence of the new world of Forms, the divine realm becomes crowded: what is the relationship between the new and the traditional divine worlds? What is the status of the cosmos, the gods and the Forms? And how are we to place them in the proper order? All of these questions require a reconsideration of the role of gods and the nature of cosmos. Only when the old world is properly thought through can the new world be established on a more solid basis. In this sense, it is not surprising for us to see that the *Timaeus*, a text concerning cosmology, extends the reasoning of the *Republic*.[48] And we will see, in

[48] Johansen (2013) insightfully points out that "there are points in the *Republic* where cosmology of the sort developed in the *Timaeus* intrudes on the ethical and political account, in a way that shows the essential interconnectedness for Plato of the human sphere and the rest of the cosmos." See also Rowe (2007a, 2007b), Taylor (1944) 42.

Plato's new cosmology and theology, that the divine world is indeed significantly transformed: it is no longer a sexual world of *eros* and *eris*, but, as has already been implied in the revised autochthony, also a rational and desire-free world where intelligence instructs actions. Let us now turn to Plato's discussion of cosmos and gods before we continue our discussion of Plato's social order.

III. How about Cosmos and Gods?

An explicit dramatic connection between the *Republic* and the prelude of the *Timaeus* indicates that the following discussion in the *Timaeus* is closely linked to the dialogue that happened "yesterday" (*Tim*. 17a, 17b, 17c) in the *Republic*.[49] Well before the coming of "today", immediately after the conversation of yesterday, the interlocutors have already begun to reflect on Socrates' speech. We are told that they talked about the story of Atlantis, the so-called ideal city in action (*Critias*), and the origin of cosmos (*Timaeus*) in the night of yesterday. Today they will present these discussions specifically to Socrates, and, according to Timaeus, "today's" discussion is a feast in return for the hospitality that they received from Socrates for his discussion about the ideal city. This is why, in the very beginning of the prelude, Timaeus reviews a large part of the *Republic* in detail: how the new autochthonous social order is established and how the class of guardians is formed. If Critias' ideal city in action is an expected continuance of Socrates' ideal city in speech, why is the cosmology presented as a follow-up topic?

It is interesting to note that the rule of the philosopher-king in Timaeus' recollection is absent – his recount stops at the "second wave". This significant lack has always been considered as a textual problem.[50] For some scholars, it is even adduced as

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There are some doubts on the dramatic sequence, for which see Brann (1989-90) 23, Cornford (1937) 5.

[49] The problematic time setting of the "festival" in *Republic* and *Timaeus* has invited a lot of discussions. On whether the two works are set in a dramatic sequence in the context of a historical festival, Sallis [(1999) 21-26] offers a good summary of this debate from ancient to modern times. However, no matter whether the dramatic time is consistent with the historical time, the repeated emphases on "yesterday" must indicate a logical and dramatic continuation of the two dialogues.

[50] On the omission of the philosopher, some scholars ascribe it to the development of Plato's idea from the middle to late works [Vlastos (1971), 212-17, Klosko (1986) chapters 11-13]; others propose an ambiguous reading neither denying nor presenting philosophical rule [Rowe (1997), Schofield (1997) 220-30]. See also Sallis (1999) 23-24, Broadie (2011) 127.

evidence to support their assumption that the *Timaeus* has little to do with the *Republic*.[51] However, instead of following the negative interpretation above, I propose a positive reading: under the context of the prelude where a Platonic drama usually forms its background for the entire dialogue, the *omission* of the "third wave" may well be a profound setting.

As we have discussed above, with the establishment of social order, cosmology and theology now become a necessary issue. However, in the *Republic*, as the "third wave" mainly aims at the rule of philosopher kings following the principle of Form, cosmology is only discussed quickly so that the Forms can be investigated in a more uninterrupted way. But even in such a relatively rushed fashion, the importance of the cosmology can still be seen: ten years' learning of astronomy is a compulsory requirement in Socrates' educational process. Judging from the intricate argument in the *Timaeus*, it is plausible that the issue of cosmology is so complicated that it needs an additional lengthy discussion. And this issue, related to the divine realm, should be dealt with precisely between the second and the third waves, i.e. before the pursuit of the ultimate world of Forms.

Therefore, Timaeus' deliberate stop at the "second wave" may well indicate that the following narrative of cosmology is in effect an important part of Socrates' philosophical education which is supposed to be developed in the *Republic*. The entire work on cosmology can thus be taken as a necessary supplement to the construction of the ideal city. Socrates' specific emphasis on the well-educated character (*Tim*. 27a) of the interlocutors further confirms the educational feature of Timaeus' speech. Timaeus' monologue thus becomes a necessary step on the path towards the world of Forms and a preparation for the final dialectic probing of the metaphysical subject.[52]

Critias, on the other hand, makes such a structure even clearer. After a brief description of his speech – the Atlantis-Athens story concerning the ideal city in action – Critias refuses to go on his narrative in more detail; instead, he insists that the sequence

[51] Brann (1989-90) and Cornford (1937).

[52] It is interesting to note that the cosmology is introduced by the form of monologue instead of the dialectic usually used for philosophical probing. The deliberate choice of the dialogue pattern may well indicate the relationship between the Cosmos and the higher world of Forms. Ascending from the investigation of the Cosmos to the metaphysical world parallels the transformation from monologue to dialectic method. See Miller (2003).

of speech should follow his arrangement (*Tim*. 27a): Timaeus' cosmology should come *first* and the depiction of the ideal city *second* (*Tim*. 27a). This is because without a proper understanding of the cosmology and theology, neither the ideal city in speech (Socrates) nor that in action (Critias) can be fully considered. From here, Socrates becomes silent, as the undeveloped educational part in his scheme will now be added.

Now let us look at the origin and the nature of the cosmos in Timaeus' speech. We can see that Timaeus also chooses to present it in the form of a myth, which is, again, an explicit indication of the philosopher's self-consciousness response to the mythic tradition. Starting with an invocation of gods, the topic of the cosmic origin is shown to be closely linked to the issue of the theological world. For the audience, this might seem a rather conventional start, as that in the traditional mythic system: the origin of the Cosmos *per se* is equal to the generation of the gods.[53] However, right after the introduction of the "gods", we are told that the divine figure involved in the origin of the new Cosmos is only a single god, Demiurge (*Tim*. 28a: ὸ δημιουργὸς), i.e. a craftsman (*Tim*. 28a), the maker and father (*Tim*. 28c) of the universe. It is he alone who "makes" the Cosmos.

It is interesting to note that the Demiurge is referred to as both maker (ποιητής) and father (πατήρ). It has been argued that these two identities essentially form a paradoxical combination, as the former is the one who "creates" things artificially while the latter is the one who "begets" children naturally.[54] But I would suggest that such a paradoxical identity may have indicated a transformed pattern of the origin of the Cosmos. The Cosmos is no longer conceived according to the traditional picture of generational, especially sexual, procreation but is brought into being in a certain non-sexual way, though the craftsman who makes it can still be recognized as a father, i.e. a source of origin. This new god thus becomes distinguished from traditional gods, especially those in the first generation, whose physical bodies are directly taken as parts of the substantial Cosmos and who literally give birth to the next generation. A new

[53] Pender (2009) notices that "in this traditional gesture, Timaeus calls on the gods to support his discourse and re-enacts the familiar invocations of epic, including Hesiod's invocation to the Muses at *Theogony* 104–15". The link between mythic tradition especially Hesiodic tradition and its reception in Timaeus' speech has been discussed by many scholars. On the epic features of *Timaeus*, see Nagy (2002) ch.2, Capra (2009). For more general discussions on Plato and Hesiod, see Most (2009).
[54] Sallis (1999) 48.

creation system is to be presented. Then the question is: what exactly is the origin of the Cosmos? Is it like the traditional origin of the universe?

Certainly, the new origin is entirely different from the traditional one. At the mythic level, the Demiurge can be taken as one kind of beginning of the Cosmos, as it is he who brings to light the most perfect being. Taking it as a living creature with bodily form (*Tim*. 30b) – another transformed feature in response to the traditionally personalised Cosmos – the process of "making" the universe is narrated straightforwardly as a combination of soul and body. Although this narrative is often criticized for its teleological approach,[55] the logic behind it is still significant. According to Timaeus, the most beautiful being (*Tim*. 29a) is perfect without any instability or conflicts *a priori*, both in its visible body and invisible soul, since when making it, the Demiurge "fixed his eyes on eternal" so that the Cosmos could be "constructed after the Forms through reasoning and thought" in imitation (*Tim*. 29a). Following the same principle of the Forms, the making of the body and the soul can thus be consistent with one another.

The entire process of the generation is highly mathematized and rationalized. Both of them are constructed in a numerical model and with geometric beauty. As we can see, on the bodily level, four basic elements (fire, air, water and earth) transform and conjoin with each other in certain ratios and by the help of a "middle" term in the concept of triplicity.[56] At the level of the soul (the ruler of the body), too, the construction is composed in a similarly arithmetic way in which a triple theory of dividing and combination is conducted: the soul is composed by the Indivisible Same, the Divisible

[55] Morrow (1950), Lee (1971) 7, Vlastos (1975), Sedley (1977, 2009), Cleary (1997) Carone (2004). Plato's teleology is also often compared with that of Aristotle. See Johansen (2008). But it should be noted that Plato himself never uses the term "teleology".
[56] For example, A:B = B:C, so C:B = B:A, so B:C = C:A, so C:A = A:B. These four proportional relations form an interchangeable cycle, and thus the three elements may form a stable unity with predictable changes (*Tim*. 32a). When this pattern is applied to the four elements, the construction of the cosmic body is also shown to be a cyclic system. All visible beings can thus be integrated into a holistic entity (*Tim*. 32b). On number, ratio and bodily form, see the excellent analysis by Miller (2003).

Difference and the blending of the two (*Tim*. 35a-b).[57] Then the entire mixture is divided and conjugated according to ratio (*Tim*. 35b-36a).[58]

At this moment, there is no need to go into a detailed discussion of such a construction, which has been a subject of much debate, but to note that it is the same mathematic principle (triplicity) that ensured consistency between the visible and the invisible parts of the cosmos, and it is such a principle that leads to perfect harmony of the cosmos. Therefore, overall, a congruence between the Cosmos and the eternal world is shown in this mathematical presentation. Although, as we will see later, Plato does not lack a recognition of the Wandering cause (cause of Necessity) after the cosmic creation that sometimes breaks the geometrical rule here, numbers and ratio are still the very basic intermediaries of the two worlds, which carry the essence of eternity. Measured proportion presents an intellectual abstraction of the structure in the physical instance.[59] In this way, the physical cosmos and the eternal paradigm are co-occurrent with each other. In this "flat" narrative of the cosmic creation, there is neither conflict nor disorder. All generation are rational and orderly in a numerical structure – even the movements and changes in the process are not caused by impulsive powers such as *eris* or *eros* in the

[57] I take Taylor's reading that the "Same" is equal to the "Indivisible" and the "Different" is equal to "Divisible". Taylor (1928) 128.

[58] This passage about the creation of the soul is widely acknowledged to be one of most perplexing sections in the entire *Timaeus*. Its difficulty focuses on the ambiguous meanings of the Indivisible, the Divisible and the blending, which have provoked varying interpretations ever since it was written. Among all the readings, I take Taylor's view [(1928) 106-136] as the basis of my understanding. Taylor points out that the concept of the two is closely linked to Pythagorean arithmetic theory on the antithesis of ἄπειρον and πέρας (unlimited and limit), in which the former refers to even number while the latter to odd number, and the combination of unlimitedness and limitedness is the unit, i.e. 1, which is regarded as both odd and even. Following this reading, we may take the Indivisible to be odd numbers such as 3, the Divisible to be even numbers such as 2 and the blend of the two to be the "unit" 1. The very basic numeric system based on 1, 2 and 3 is thus formed. This reading is well applied to the following process of division (*Tim*. 35b), in which the portion is taken first as 1 and double (2) and three times (3). After that, the number system is constructed under the principle of parity. Further numbers based on 1, 2 and 3 are produced according to the principle of "middle-term ratio". After the division has been accomplished, all the numbers are put together again in an ordered fashion to form the final pattern of the soul. It is imperative to note that, according to Klein [(1968) 46-60], in ancient Greek thought one is not regarded as a number but a pure unit – the smallest number begins with two since numbers are really numbers of pure units, i.e. a number of "ones". Therefore "one" becomes the very basis of mathematical formation both in the theory of Cosmology and of Society.

[59] Broadie (2011) 76-77. See also Mohr (2005).

traditional sense. This is because they are combined and split solely by the Demiurge, who is the *only* motivation of generation. As long as the Demiurge conducts his creation in a rational way, there can be no disorder at all.

But it is noteworthy that the Demiurge is not the ultimate source of such order since, even though the cosmos is made by the Demiurge in person, he does not act at his own will but *imitates* the eternal paradigm, i.e. the Forms, which are obviously of higher authority than the maker himself. The stability and harmony that the Demiurge brings to the Cosmos is in effect derived from the world of Forms. In this sense, the Demiurge is not only different from traditional gods but also from the Jewish God in Genesis, who creates the world literally *ex nihilo*. The Demiurge here simply brings out the nature of the Forms into the presentation of the physical world, which is essentially an autonomous system. From this perspective, the Forms are actually a more fundamental origin than the Demiurge: the Demiurge in essence may not be a real creator, but rather a *mediator* who manifests the natural congruence between the Forms and the Cosmos.[60] This is why, when for a second time Timaeus discusses the "origin" of the Cosmos, the imitation of the eternal world of Forms is taken as a more natural beginning (*Tim*. 29b) prior to the "creation" of the Demiurge.

The weakened role of the Demiurge allows the narrative of the cosmic origin in the *Timaeus* to be transformed from a traditional mythic telling to a logical examination. In a more radical sense – if the text can be read non-literally –[61] the narrative of the myth itself, as pointed out by Sedley, can "convey important truths in a non-literal fashion" and

[60] The role of Demiurge has always been a central point of discussion, which is directly linked to the larger debate on literal/non-literal readings of the entire text. For those who take the *Timaeus* literally, the Demiurge is a substantial existence who literally creates the Cosmos like the God in the Genesis, while in the non-literal reading the Demiurge is only a "metaphoric example of a form of action" [Pears (2015) 113] or himself a "form" [de Vogel (1970) 194-209, Perl (1998)] in a systematic instead of chronological framework.

[61] Commentaries on the *Timaeus* have been divided into two parties, supporting either a literal or non-literal reading. On the literal reading, see Vlastos (1965, 1975), Hackforth (1959), Robinson (1979, 1993), Guthrie (1978), Mohr (1989), Reale (1997), Hankinson (1998), Broadie (2011). In antiquity, readings tended to be non-literal. See Aristotle (*de Caelo* 110,280a 28 ff.; *Metaphysics* XΠ 6,1071b37-2a2), Xenocrates (fr. 54 Heinze), Plutarch (*de An Proc* 1014a-b), etc. For modern scholarship, see Taylor (1928), Cornford (1937), Cherniss (1944), Tarán (1971), Brisson (1974), Mohr (2005), Sedley (2009). The bibliography of Carone (2004 note 2) is more comprehensive than my select list here. Some scholars try to find "a middle way", such as Carone (2004), but her argument still attempts to distinguish the two opposite readings.

the presentation of the Demiurge could be "primarily for expository reasons" instead of a figural presentation.[62] Indeed, the Demiurge from the beginning is narrated as a mythic figure for the sake of the likely discourse (*Tim*. 29c: εἰκὼς λόγος):[63] as the metaphysical world cannot be explained directly, both the genre of story-telling and fictive figures are needed to present it indirectly (*Tim*. 29c). As the purpose of staging the Demiurge is to ultimately manifest the natural congruence of the Cosmos and the world of Forms, the role of the Demiurge is in fact so limited that his fictive character and his act of "making" do not fundamentally affect the inner structure of the Cosmos. The emphasis on the εἰκὼς λόγος in the story of the Demiurge and the essential consistency between the Cosmos and the eternal world of Forms together indicate that the genuine Cosmos of Plato is in essence an eternal world without a first moment of creation in time.[64]

Through the non-literal reading, we can more properly understand the ἀρχή of the cosmic order. In the literal reading, the moment of the transformation from disorder to order by the making of the Demiurge (*Tim*. 30a) is usually taken as the chronological starting point of the Cosmos,[65] and the status of disorder is described as a pre-cosmic or proto-historical beginning.[66] However, from the non-literal perspective, the opposition between orderly Cosmos and disordered pre-Cosmos can be understood in another way.

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[62] Sedley (2009) 100.

[63] Timaeus' account as a "likely story" is repeatedly emphasized: *Tim*. 29d2, 44d1, 48d2, 53d5, 55d5, 56a1, 56b4, 56d1, 68b7, 72d7, 90e8.

[64] Burnyeat (2005), for example, argues that the property of being "*eikôs*" should be understood as the virtue of being "reasonable", which reduces the significance of the literal reading. Grasso (2012) and Brisson (2012a) attempt to respond to this view by restoring the complexity of the "likely discourse" and the relationship between *mythos* and *logos*. Although it is debatable whether the translation for the "*eikôs*" should be "reasonable," it is plausible that the "likely discourse" of Timaeus is a "true" *mythos* in the sense that it is rooted in a direct apprehension of the ultimate intelligible form. The issue is even more complex at the level of etymology and linguistics, which forges a philosophical awareness of its limitation in the paradoxical use of *logos* for philosophical quest. As Morgan [(1998) 275-77] notes: "Since Timaeus' cosmological account is limited by the requirement of context, subject, and language, there is ample justification for labelling it a mythos. The situation is complicated, however, by the use of *logos* to describe it…The cosmology is a likely account of the creation of and forces at work in the universe. Likelihood is all that can be claimed for it, both because of the *limitations of language itself* and because of *the nature of the subject matter* [my emphasis]. The problematic status of the account is signalled by referring to it as a *mythos*, but there is considerable slippage between this term and *logos*."

[65] See the discussions by Sedley (2009) and Tarán (1971).

[66] Broadie (2011) 5.

As the concept of the "Cosmos" is exclusively tied up with the concept of "order", the Cosmos *per se* can thus be defined as an "orderly" being. And in this sense, the disorder can actually be more "*anti-cosmic*" than "*pre-cosmic*". Anything that is disorder is against the cosmic principle. This means that whatever does not imitate the world of Forms is not of the cosmos. In this regard, Timaeus' cosmos is a *finite* and *limited* realm that is secondary to eternal Forms and has its own boundary. The Cosmos falls only into the scope of order while all elements of disorder are removed from the scope forcedly. The boundary is crucial here. It sets a restriction for the construction: not everything existing at large is allowed to be integrated into the Cosmos. In this sense, the ἀρχή of the Cosmos is taken as a boundary for the differentiation of Cosmos and non-Cosmos as well as order and disorder, rather than a literal "beginning". It is the *principle* of the Cosmos. This means that the ἀρχή of the Cosmos may not even necessarily require a temporal origin but is in itself a timeless entity embodying the eternal world of Forms.

The concept of "time" in the text further supports our reading. Although the literal narrative presents a certain process of cosmic creation, "time" comes rather late – long after the forming of the Cosmos (*Tim*. 37d). It is so closely linked to the establishment of "order" that without the construction of the Cosmos there is no proper measure for its existence.[67] Time is thus a secondary concept within the category of the Cosmos and therefore the ἀρχή of the Cosmos can have little to do with the common perception of chronology, even on the literal reading. What really matters throughout the narrative is the transformation from disorder to order. Order as the most fundamental principle of the Cosmos in effect prescribes a logical limit to the *starting point* for our *understanding* of the cosmic world.[68] Therefore, if there is ever a temporal beginning, we would say that it is the beginning of re-understanding the essential nature of the Cosmos and redefining what we call "Cosmos". In this way, the sense of "genesis" has been again weakened.

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[67] As proposed by Vlastos (1939, 1965), time is not simply a temporal concept but a measurement of order. In other words, time is directly linked to the existence of order. See also Lee (1971) 11, Sallis (1999) 83, Sedley (2009) 100.

[68] The four elements are a good example. Matters exist prior to the forming of the cosmos. At that time, they are called "such like" (49e-50b) instead of being given the terminology such as "fire" or "water", as they constantly change and exhibit a variety of appearances (52d). And when they are "formed" geometrically, they immediately became "kinds" with names "fire, water, air and earth" which are then used in the forming of the cosmos (31b-32b). What matters here is the point at which the "order" is established and this is exactly the definition of the cosmos. This point is more a principle (ἀρχή), a logical beginning – in accordance with the Forms – than a chronological starting point.

With the revolutionary ἀρχή, the traditional *definition* of the "cosmos" is radically subverted. Chaos is expelled forcibly from the realm of "cosmos" and all traditional conflicts and disorder in the origin of Cosmos are also cut out. Within the scope of the Cosmos, the issue of the "establishment" of order is a pseudo-proposition, as the very beginning of the Cosmos is order itself without any need for further improvement. Although it is true that the Cosmos is constantly "becoming" (γένεσις), those changes and movements happen just within the scope of the Cosmos according to order; therefore, this perfect Cosmos is still isolated from disorder. Compared to the traditional, especially Hesiodic cosmology, we might say that the Timaean Cosmos has skipped all the conflicts in the first two generations and comes directly to Zeus' time, when order is well framed. However, unlike the traditional narrative, since there is no previous disorder to be dealt with – if we remember that the order of Zeus is set up through his resolution to the sexual and generational conflicts in the pre-Zeus era –[69] the order of the Timaean Cosmos comes without any forced suppression of disorder but is a pure single being without opposition.[70] The change – the "becoming" of the Cosmos – is straightforwardly ordered without potential conflicts. If the world of Zeus is still threatened by constant challenges of disorder within its system, the absolute elimination of disorder in the new Cosmos guarantees an absolute order throughout the cosmic time.

[69] See my discussion in Chapter 1.

[70] In considering unpredictable disorder and randomness within the Cosmos, Plato acknowledges its existence as a "necessary cause" (*anagkē*), an auxiliary type to the dominant intelligent agent (*nous*). But different from the traditional dualist view on the order and disorder, here Plato's construction attempts to degrade the violent power to a secondary category in a hierarchical system, in which disorder can be "persuaded" (48a: πείθει) by intelligence and thereby is integrated into the bigger picture of cosmic justice dominated (ἄρχων) by intelligent force (although in extreme circumstances there is a room for the autonomy of necessity cause – the destruction of the morally perfect Athens in the Atlantis story is a good example – the possibility of "persuasion" still changes the entire tone of the existence of disorder). Sedley [(2009) 113-27] even proposes that the existence of this inferior cause is "a part of plan" for the sake of the real achievement of philosophy and civilization – a room for freedom and action of rational souls. See also Taylor (1956) 454, Valstos (1975), Pears (2015). Cf. Cornford (1937) 161-77, Strange (1985), Reydams-Schils (2003). On the connection between necessity and women, see an interesting paper by Krell (1975); cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. 1015a 32.

Through the imitation of the eternal world of Forms,[71] the new Cosmos inherits stability and eternity from the higher world. However, the price it pays is a degradation of its status as an authority for the ordering of human society.[72] As the Cosmos looks up to a higher authority for its own justification, it no longer acts as a source of justification *a priori*. As a result, the ultimate divinity is transferred from the Cosmos to the world of Forms, even if the Cosmos as the best imitator still maintains its sublime character. The establishment of the highest authority of the eternal world is significant. As the justification of the cosmic order comes exclusively from this higher being, all the creatures within the Cosmos will naturally follow the same principle. The world of Forms thus offers not only a template for the creation of Cosmos but also a model for the maintenance of order. As we see, from gods to human beings, from male to female, all the creatures *within* this Cosmos are subject to the highest principle of order (*Tim*. 40a-47e). This authority is consistent all the way down.

There is no need to explore further the details of creation *within* the Cosmos, for it imitates the creation of the Cosmos as much as possible.[73] After the principle of cosmic order is established, the teleological construction in the following narrative can be readily seen. For our purposes, however, it is still imperative to look at the world of gods and human beings.[74] As the genealogy of the Cosmos is entirely independent of the generation of gods, the traditional perception of gods must be changed. The gods are no longer at the same level as the Cosmos and are deprived of their fundamental role as founding father of the world. They are simply regarded as *a* kind of living creature among all other races, such as birds, fish, and human beings (*Tim*. 40a). These gods have lost their authority as

[71] At the ontological level, the congruence between the perfect cosmos and the world of Forms must have largely removed the temporal dimension and made the cosmos a *sempiternal* one. Broadie (2011) 246.

[72] Lee insightfully notes: "The world of the *Timaeus* is one in which there is a hierarchy of divine beings." Lee (1971) 7.

[73] *Tim*. 41c-42c. But notice: within the scope of imitation, the hierarchical system is still insisted upon. From the Demiurge to gods and then to human beings, the abilities of imitation are different, from high to low. The lower the class, and thus the further from the original world of Forms, the less accurate will be the imitation.

[74] I use the singular noun "world" instead of plural in that, in the new Cosmos, there are no longer two separate worlds of immortal gods and mortal human beings but only one unified cosmic world; that means that they are not even essentially two species, since the only difference between them is immorality and mortality.

overlords, although they are "by lot" (*Tim*. 41b)[75] immortal and created intelligibly by the Demiurge in person and thus occupy the highest position within the hierarchy of living beings.

Within the race of gods, there are two groups, star gods and traditional gods. The star gods are said to be created by the Demiurge and the traditional gods are born generationally from their own reproduction. Why are there two groups of gods? It is an odd setting, which invites many debates on their relationship.[76] For many scholars, it seems that these two groups are so different from one another that they can hardly belong to the same category. That is especially true because, compared to the star gods who are narrated in a reverential tone, the traditional gods are presented so sceptically – "it is impossible to disbelieve the children of gods, even though their statements lack either probable or necessary demonstration" (*Tim*. 40e) – that their existence in the cosmos seems to be only a compromise with the mythic tradition.

However, I would like to suggest that such a combination is more profound than redundant, enabling the revolution of the cosmology finally to be realized. It is imperative to point out that the entire picture of those traditional gods has been decisively revised, although Timaeus proposes deliberately that "we should follow the custom and believe the narrative of the poets" (*Tim*. 40e). The generational evolution is recounted plainly without any mention of battles among gods, and the entire process is stable, orderly and harmonious (*Tim*. 40e-41a). This means that all the reproductions of the traditional gods are free from the original pattern of conflict engendered by *eros* and *eris*, and thus their image is well tailored for the new cosmic system. With star gods as a comparison, the taming of the traditional gods is more explicit: it is not star gods that are endowed with traditional divine features, but, on the contrary, it is traditional gods who follow the new pattern, i.e. stable, orderly, harmonious and with a kind of rational beauty. In this way, the traditional world of gods is fundamentally changed: it is made subject to the principles of the Cosmos, and further, the principles of the eternal world. In a radical sense, the gods are desacralized.

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[75] Again, no decisive divine *eris* is present at all in the process of distribution and division. Cf. the Divine *eris* between Athena and Poseidon in autochthony.

[76] On the relationship between traditional gods and celestial gods, see for example Cornford (1937), Tarán (1971), Belfiore (1985), Baltzly (2010). Cf. Hartshorne and Reese (1953) and Cooper (2007) on Panentheism.

It is time to return to the revised autochthony for a moment. If we still remember from the "noble lie" that the gods' role is to establish different metallic natures in different individuals without any involvement of *eros* and *eris*, we may now realize that those gods with ambiguous identity may already have been transformed into the new gods that we have seen here in the *Timaeus*. Although in the *Republic* Socrates does not explain why the gods would frame the society in that way, with the highest principle the world of Forms where intelligence and order are presented explicitly as the primary source of instruction, it is likely that those gods in autochthony are following just such a principle, and thus that the entire construction of social order that has been presented is thoroughly consistent with the entire cosmology and theology discussed later.

Then what about human beings? The gods, after they are generated, take over the work of the Demiurge and make the rest of the mortal creatures in the Cosmos, including human beings. The creation of mankind is also conducted according to the principle of order. But since mortal bodies can decay, this race is not perfect anymore but readily loses symmetrical balance and thereby is necessarily contaminated by disorder and evils during the process of change.[77] For the theory of change and disorder, one could look at the sophisticated discussion on movement and motion (*Tim*. 57d-58c) and diseases of the body (*Tim*. 61d-87b, especially 82a ff.) based on the understanding of balance and unbalance of geometry, mathematics and proportion, which we do not have space to investigate at length here. What is significant for us is that, as disorder comes into being, the differences between good and bad, moral and immoral, justice and injustice appear. How does Plato deal with this? Naturally, following the principle of the eternity, the highest status within these races is given to those who "always follow justice" (*Tim*. 41c), while those who do things unjustly will be degraded in the next birth. In this way, a distinctive hierarchy in the realm of mortals appears: from high to low, there are men, women and beasts. This successive chain depends exclusively on following the eternal principle. Therefore, mastering the intellectual soul, which always follows the eternal Forms through rational reasoning, becomes crucial. Intelligence is directly linked to moral behaviour and social justice in the grand cosmological framework, and innate intellectual ability becomes the only standard for this hierarchical order.

[77] On the treatment of the disorder and evil elements see my note 69. Pears also proposes that we understand the evil and moral corruption as a function of the "incompleteness" of the lesser part. Pears (2015) 99-101.

Now we can see that the strong systematic construction of and within the Cosmos displays a clear *vertical* order based on the eternal world of Forms. It is a neatly layered system from the highest point all the way down. The Cosmos imitates the eternal world (visible vs invisible), the world of gods imitates the Cosmos (immortal vs eternal), men imitate gods (mortal vs immortal), women are inferior to men (irrational vs rational), beasts are inferior to women (more irrational vs rational). The higher the status, the closer to the original stable order. The traditional understating of cosmology and theology is now fundamentally subverted. To be sure, the most crucial – *and* the most dangerous – step is the reassignment of the highest authority, which is shifted from the world of gods/Cosmos to the world of Forms. This move depends on the redefinition of cosmic origin and cosmic nature. In Timaeus' presentation, as the origin of the Cosmos is no longer a logical beginning, it is degraded to a secondary existence without self-justification. The highest divinity is now the eternal world, instead of the Cosmos and the gods in the traditional sense.

For Plato, if stable order is to be eternally maintained, the highest authority should be purely *stable* and *ordered*. The Cosmos cannot be such an authority, as it constantly *changes* by nature: it is γένεσις, becoming. In the phenomenal realm, its diversity, instability and natural feature of movement and conflict not only fail to provide a solid ground for order, but also encourage a justification of those conflicts and disorder if taken as a model for imitation. This is exactly the trouble of the traditional cosmology and theology. The mythic narrative of the cosmic generation is a depiction of conflict and change *per se*: the genealogical universe is a battle field for engendered beings. The problem becomes even more intricate as the theory of cosmology is mingled with theology. In this setting, the divinity of gods endows the genesis model with additional authority, so that the cosmic conflicts and theological disorder are further justified. The result is that the very origin and authority of the universe naturally contrasts with the establishment of order.

According to Plato, if such *aporia* is to be overcome and if social order is to be established and justified in imitation of the divine world, one must give up the entire traditional pattern and look for stable order from a realm beyond it. Here Plato proposes the orderly world of Forms. As it is beyond the entire cosmological – visible – world, it is beyond the world of "becoming", thereby acquiring divine authority *a priori* by its nature of "being", i.e. order. Now the cosmic order can begin directly with order. In fact, with this

new divinity, it is very hard to say whether any other divine agents are still necessary in the construction of social order. Although Plato deals with traditional gods in a rather ambiguous sense, we can still see a fundamental transformation of these figures. They have completely given way to the new divinity and fade out from the relationship of divine heaven and human beings. Their only function in the new system is to strengthen the hierarchical order; since they are "gods", they still rank highly, but the foundation for their status has been completely changed: they become a moral model for the maintenance of order.

The reassignment of the highest authority thus leads to a decisive subversion of traditional ontology. Starting straightforwardly from order means that disorder is out of the ontological scope in its original sense. However, we should note that in Plato's order-oriented Cosmos, disorders are by no means absent. They do appear later, after the mortal creatures are produced. This actually revises the traditional sequence of order/disorder. But this reversal means more than a change of logical sequence. In effect, it changes the fundamental relationship of the two. It should be noted that the disorder in the new system is no longer an equally antithetical power against order, but a deficient condition of it. If soul cannot master body, i.e. if a creature departs from its original nature, disorder appears. This means that the disorder is a corruption of order and thus requires a return to the original condition. The sequential creation of men, women and beasts manifests exactly this process: the degradation of these races is based on the failure to behave justly, but as long as someone ceases from injustice and "yields himself to the revolution of the Same and the Similar that is *within* him, and dominating by force of reason" he shall "return again to the semblance of his *first* and *best* (τὸ τῆς πρώτης καὶ ἀρίστης) state" (*Tim*. 42d), even if he is currently at the bestial stage.

The construction of the Cosmos inherently provides a foundation for Plato's theory of return. As an orderly state is naturally "within him", the return thus means to turn back in nature as much as possible and to reveal the original nature that has been lost. Looking upwards, the ultimate divinity is the place where the return should aim. As we have seen, the higher the status, the closer to the original order. Indeed, Plato's phrase Ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, "becoming like god so far as is possible", is, cosmologically speaking, "the return of the rational soul to its own original nature".[78]

[78] Sedley (1997) 332. See also Armstrong (2004). On the "returning" to one's "original" nature, see also Sallis (1999) 46, Broadie (2011) 123-23.

This mechanism, by assuming that human nature is good, opens up the possibility of pursuing Good for every individual and society. [79] Recall that, in the revised autochthonous order of the *Republic*, men and women are different. Although they share the same nature, women are in general inferior to men.[80] Now such inferiority seems to find a reason here. With the new definition of man and woman, woman's general inferiority is primarily conceptual: in the sense of concept, woman belongs to a lower level by definition. But since all living creatures have a possibility of 'return', with an effort of intelligence, then so long as women learn properly and turn themselves towards the eternal world, it is possible for them to gain a capacity equal to that of men.[81]

The last question would be: how to return? A simple answer to this is: through intelligent effort, i.e. following the "palintropic" path through rational reasoning of soul.[82] As the teleological construction of the Cosmos has shown, the genuine realm of order is beyond the empirical perception of the visible world; the only way to return is to pursue the knowledge of the eternal world. Invisible though the world is, the progressive demonstration of the cosmic creation offers a path of ascending. The eternal principle can be traced back through low to high, from less likely to more likely, from the creation of man to the creation of Cosmos. Now all the mathematical, proportional and geometrical descriptions are significant. On the one hand, they show the process of cosmic construction, while on the other hand they display an approach of abstracting a visible world to an invisible world.[83] When the physical world is demonstrated, analysed, and constructed in geometrical structures, phenomenal and sensational substance is in turn deconstructed. As a result, the entire Cosmos becomes a mathematical model and the physical world becomes in essence an orderly formation (by measure of proportion)

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[79] Sedley offers a good explanation on the necessity of the objective existence of divinity: "The divine world soul and our own souls, akin in their very origin, are constructed in such a way as to enable us, via the study of astronomy and mathematics, to share god's own thoughts." Sedley (1997) 328.

[80] See my discussion in section 2.

[81] Plato's theory of "return" is, of course, closely related to his epistemological theory of "recollective" memory, which has been deeply discussed in *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo*. On whether recollection happens to all human beings at some level, see the discussions by Thompson (1868) 55, Hackforth (1952) 86, Scott (1995) 77.

[82] I borrow the term "palintropic" from Sallis (1999) 45, 94.

[83] The transformation from physical to metaphysical world can be conducted in the numerical system itself. On the nature of number, see Sallis (1999) 7-8, Broadie (2011) 76, Mohr (2005) xxv.

of all kinds of geometrical units.[84] Mathematics and geometry lay a foundation for the abstraction of Forms, as they unparticularize a certain object and reduce it into a single Form.[85] According to this principle in Timaeus' construction, a white table and a black table can be abstracted as "table", since both of the two objects are made of a certain mixture of the four elements by measure of proportion. The same structure within them would indicate that they are actually the same construction and thereby belong to the same Form of "table". Certainly, the theory of Forms is far more intricate than this example, which calls for another lengthy discussion that our space here does not afford, but, for the moment, the discussion above has been sufficient for us to see why in both the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* mathematics and geometry are fundamental mediations for the ascent from the visible world to invisible world,[86] and also why astronomy is regarded as so important a subject for the education of a philosopher-king. Now it is time to end our discussion on the crucial supplement to the third wave and turn back to Plato's revised autochthony for its completion.

IV. Autochthony in Completion

As we have discussed above, in Socrates' discourse of autochthony, the most crucial feature is the rule of a philosopher-king. Now with the cosmological and theological picture, the necessity of the philosopher's ruling can be better understood. Through imitating the world of Forms philosophers maintain the real order of society.[87]

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[84] To the smallest unit, even the four elements (fire, air, water and earth) that form the Cosmos geometrically are themselves shown to be geometrically formed from the combination of triangles (53e-56e). For a graphic demonstration, see Vlastos (1975) figures 2-7. Plato's omission of discussion of the solids which make up the combined triangular elements has come under criticism [Lee (1971) 16], but it can be expected that, as in the revolutionary narrative of the Cosmos, what Plato is really concerned about is the structure itself instead of solids.

[85] I emphasize the role of geometry as it shows an entirely different foundation of sociology and theology from the traditional thinking. But, as I have indicated above, geometry is not the highest form of presentation and intellectual thinking since it is, for example, inferior to dialectic and is different from metaphysical thinking (appearing before the pursuit of philosophy) and thereby should not be taken directly as a representative of the highest philosophical thought.

[86] Carone (2004) 342.

[87] See section 2. The ethical and moral function of the cosmic construction has been discussed by many scholars, see for example, Shorey (1988), Carone (2004), Mahoney (2005).

This is not merely because they are the group of people who are able to get closest to the eternal order through their rational reasoning, but because their practice of the principle of Forms is in keeping with the very *nature* of social order *per se*.

Cosmologically speaking, the holistic social structure constructed by Socrates' speech is in essence coherent with the cosmological structure and thus the overall divine world. The parallel between social order and cosmological order is clear: both of them are formed hierarchically and geometrically from atomized units based on intelligent capacity. At the physical level, the mathematical and atomized formation guarantees the indistinction of physical units – regardless of whether they are materials, items or individual human beings. And at the metaphysical level, such a formation provides a basis for the pure construction of social and cosmological structure based on the hierarchy of intelligence. The higher the status, the closer to the eternal world; and the less intelligent in soul, the farther the beings are away from the orderly condition. No matter whether from gods to beasts, from gold to bronze, or from philosophers to craftsmen, it is the same principle that is operative.

In fact, such a parallel shows that the relationship between social order and divine order is already *beyond* the dimension of imitation. The two realms, i.e. the world of human beings and the world of divinity, are identical and interconnected intrinsically. Thus it is more plausible to say that the ideal social order is endowed with the innate nature of the eternal principle and is thereby fundamentally rooted in the naturally originated heaven-human congruence. Therefore, the social order of the ideal city is justified in its own nature and on its own terms. In this sense, the "construction" of the ideal city is not really an "artificial creation"; instead, it is a society "supposed to be": a "natural" society that should exist from the beginning.

The pursuit of the ideal city thus means a desire to *return* to nature and a possibility to go back to the original point. If there was a time when human society is supported by the entire natural order from divinity to humanity, the ideal city could be a "*real*" existence rather than merely a blueprint in speech. Ontologically speaking, this city can be more real than ever, as it is genuine by nature in the realm of "truth". Socrates' construction in the *Republic* immediately reminds Critias of the "real" ideal city, which leads to his speech afterwards. This is a natural and also necessary consequence: on the one hand, the "real" city must have existed as it is by nature embedded in ontological

reality; on the other hand, the city must exist, as only when it is realized can the depiction in speech be further justified.

Critias' speech could be said to be a confirmation of Socrates' theory. The city that Critias was thinking about is the ancient Athens 9,000 years ago,[88] an ordered city which defeated the lavish Atlantis in a large battle. There is no doubt that the victory of the ancient Athens is thanks to the realization of Socrates' ideal social construction.[89] Indeed, according to Critias, this Athenian city has exactly the same features as that of Socrates which he heard "yesterday" (*Cri*. 110d): citizens are born equally from the earth; they are divided hierarchically into different classes; men and women live together harmoniously; and in the class of Guardians, property, wife and children are shared commonly (*Cri*. 110b-d). All those features are indeed based on the revised autochthony developed in the *Republic*. However, to this point, we should still ask: is that all? If Critias just repeats and confirms the content of yesterday, what is the significance of *his* speech? And what is the point of his insistence that he should follow the narrative of Timaeus?

Critias' narrative should not be taken simply as a repetition of the *Republic* or only a kind of historical account of the ideal city "in action".[90] It is imperative for us to see what the real progress in this text is. Compared to the *Republic*, it is not difficult to notice that Critias adds two Athenian autochthonous stories "Divine Eris" and "the procreation of Athena and Hephaestus" immediately before he recalls Socrates' social theory. Structurally speaking, these two stories act as a prelude for the later narrative, and they are linked so closely to the earth-born myth in Socrates' speech that they should be integrated into the entire narrative system without a break.

It is noticeable that both of the two points are concerned with the world of gods. This is certainly a new dimension which could only be introduced after Timaeus' re-

[88] A lot of ink has been spilt on the historical reality of this Athens, especially the allusion to Marathon Athens, which this chapter does not examine in detail. See Sallis (1999) 41-45, Broadie (2011) 129-42, Osborne (1996) 190, Pradeau (1997) 224-29, Morgan (1998) 114-18; cf. Atlantis myth as a fiction, for which see Tarán (1971), Clay (1999), Annas (2010), Vidal-Naquet, (1964, 2008), Broadie (2013), Gill (1977, 1979, 1993, 2017).

[89] The ancient Athens is an ordered city while the Atlantis leads a lavish and excessive life. Words like "gold", "desire", "endless", "abundance", "surpass", "magnitude" are frequent in the description of the Atlantis. By contrast, Athens is built in a moderate fashion. See the discussion of Sallis (1999) 41ff.

[90] "Ideal city in action" is frequently used to refer to the ancient Athens in the Atlantis myth. See Tarán (1971), Morgan (1998), Sallis (1999) 27-28, 38-39, Miller (2003) 21, Sedley (2009), Annas (2010) 53-57.

imagining of the divine world.[91] And we shall see that this is the real contribution of Critias. Not surprisingly, Critias makes full use of Timaeus' achievement and revises the traditional world of gods decisively. According to Critias, there is no divine *eris* at all in the myth of autochthony. The cities are assigned to gods by lot – "not according to the result of strife" (*Cri*. 109b). Athena has never quarrelled with Poseidon as traditionally imagined. As the city goddess, Athena becomes a moral model who guides people through intellectual persuasion and makes affairs according to order (*Cri*. 109b). When it comes to the most famous story of the earth-born autochthony – Erichthonius being born from the earth – there is neither *eris* nor *eros* between Athena and Hephaestus at all; instead, they "plant" the earth-born man because they are alike in nature and agree with each other by their love of *wisdom* and *craftsmanship* (*Cri*. 109c). Later, all the names of autochthonous kings are mentioned – Kekrops, Erechtheus, Erichthonius and Erysichthon – but none of them is tangled with any kinds of conflict but they are rather embodiments of a natural virtue of order (*Cri*. 110b).

Undoubtedly, this world of gods is endowed with the typical ordered features that we have repeatedly seen in the *Timaeus*. In Critias' account, the natural society "supposed to be" must be connected with such an ordered divine world so that the establishment of social order could naturally follow upwards to the ultimate world of Forms. Although in Critias' speech the eternal world is out of sight, its principle has nevertheless been applied to all the realms of the cosmos from the world of gods to the world of human beings. Even the layout of the ancient Athenian city follows an ordered pattern according to the geometrical principle of the Cosmos (*Cri*. 112a-d. cf.116a).

Critias makes it clear that, if Socrates' ideal city is to be realized, the overall traditional divine world would be unavoidably challenged, tamed and finally subverted. This is not stated explicitly by Socrates but is a necessary result of his construction. Only with this part of the story can the holistic picture of the revised autochthony truly be said to be completed. It is significant to note that the narrative of the world of the gods is directly followed by Socrates' construction of the ideal city, i.e. his revised version of autochthony. Therefore, as we see, the combination of Critias and Socrates' autochthonies

[91] The narrative of the cosmology explains very well why Critias insists on talking about the Atlantis story *after* Timaeus. Without the understanding of the divine world, the picture of the ideal city in action can hardly be justified. It is noticeable that Critias indeed begins his speech by praying to the God "who has recently been created by their speech" (*Cri*. 106a), as it is this God who lays the foundation for his talk.

is not arbitrary but has a profound connection. They might be considered so provocative that they could only be divided into two parts with a deliberate break of a lengthy discussion of cosmology. But careful readers would not forget the original goal of Plato's writing: to retell Athenian autochthony once again.[92]

V. Conclusion

This chapter has explored Plato's philosophical thought about autochthony, from his social theory (the *Republic*) to cosmology and theology (the *Timaeus-Critias*). Under the background of Plato's Socrates' diagnosis of the mythic tradition, our analysis has attempted to show that the philosopher's reflection on this traditionally mythic discourse in the *Republic* is critical and sophisticated. For Socrates, the reason why traditional autochthony fails to establish a stable order is that its very foundation for social structure based on gender order is fundamentally problematic. Instead of taking the sexual division as its basis, Socrates in his revised autochthony, i.e. the so-called "noble lie", proposes to establish a new social order in a naturally hierarchical dimension in which intellectual capacity determines social stratification.

The new social order is a revolutionary subversion of the traditional one, which has entirely transformed the well-cultivated social structure into a revised pattern. As sexuality has been degraded as a secondary nature of human beings and the vertical order naturally requires a reconsideration of gender order, Socrates' ideal city proposes

[92] This chapter does not involve the discussion of the utopian features of Plato's ideal city, which has been debated extensively. Although I will not go so far as Strauss (1964) or Bloom (1968), who claim that the entire *Republic* is a utopian construction which deprives the city of physical body, I side with the majority scholars, taking the social scheme in this work more utopian than practical. Plato's central interest is, for me, not really in utopia – at least, he himself has never used this term – but more in a thought experiment on social order and social justice and on the exploration of how deep and how far his social theory could go. The human world as well as the cosmic world that Plato shows to his readers is, of course, serious, but that does not mean that he sincerely believes that all the theory could be applied to reality. The fundamental break between the phenomenal world and the world of Forms itself indicates the gap between theory and practice, speech and action, body and soul, physical and metaphysical – however, it is such a break that allows the greatest extension of his theory and thereby offers a beautiful experiment on the dreamed society. See also the discussion in my Coda. For discussion on utopian features in the *Republic*, see Taylor (1956) 278, Popper (1952), Annas (1981), Benardete (1992), Burnyeat (1992), Rosen (2005), Morrison (2007). On Popper and Strauss' readings against utopian idealism and historicism, although with political opposition, see Lane (1999).

an equalization of man/women's nature, a sharing of children and an abolition of the nuclear family. Since these reforms in the "three waves" break all the traditional relationships and atomize the society into undistinctive individual units such as numbers, they lay a remarkable foundation for the reconstruction of the new social order and the rule of a philosopher-king based exclusively on the intelligible soul. The new social order is thus constructed from the very beginning with a prominent feature of geometry. The structure is formed in a mathematical way, and even the plan for sexual intercourse in the community is designed countably with an unerotic rationality.

The justification for such social order and the rule of a philosopher-king lies in the fundamental congruence between social structure and the highest authority – the eternal world of Forms. As the rule of a philosopher-king follows exactly the principle of the world of Forms which is always stable, harmonious and orderly, social order in human society could be expected to be maintained in a stable condition as that of the eternal world. The teleological investigation of cosmology and theology in the *Timaeus-Critias* offers solid theoretical support to such congruence. As presented by Timaeus, the Cosmos is endowed with a rational geometrical character and is ruled by the principle of intelligence; this Platonic Cosmos is in essence an imitation of the world of Forms. Since the Cosmos – as well as all the living beings in the Cosmos, including traditional gods – naturally follows the eternal principle, social order of human society in the Cosmos can also intrinsically be connected to the eternal order. This is why, in the *Republic* and the *Timaeus-Critias*, the pattern of the Cosmos, the existence of beings and the order of society are all consistent with one another and share a common feature of geometrical intelligence. They all look up to the world of Forms.

Unlike the traditional form of autochthony, which seeks social stability by imitating a divine world of change, the revised autochthonous order does not refer to the changing Cosmos but to the higher changeless metaphysical world of Forms, so that the imitation of the supreme world can avoid the risk of being corrupted by instability and conflicts. After a redefinition of cosmology, theology and divinity, the completion of the revised autochthony is seen in the narrative of Critias. The story of autochthony is retold again, and in this finished version, all the traditionally mythic figures re-emerge, but they no longer fight and love.

Coda

After defeat in the Peloponnesian war (431-404 BCE), Athenians' enthusiasm for myths of autochthony dramatically faded and, at the end of the classical period, its mythic presentations could rarely be seen. The last known vase painting concerning autochthonous myths was produced around 320 BCE, on which Athena, Kekrops and his daughters were depicted (Figure 10). After then, no art works on such themes is known. And even this last work is somewhat a special case, since it is the only vase preserved for the whole century, between 420 and 320 BCE. Even though we cannot be sure that this is the only production concerning autochthony during that period, such a drastic decrease in such vase paintings overtime still allows us to assume that the popularity of autochthonous myths is likely to have ended long before the late 4th century BCE.

In the field of literature and philosophy, Plato (428-347 BCE) might be considered the last intellectual who took mythic thinking of autochthony seriously and who most utilized of the variation of these myths. Just one generation later, his famous pupil, the great encyclopaedic philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE), had already lost interest in this topic. Regarding social order and social justice, Aristotle never took autochthony into his consideration, nor did he revise any of its myths like his predecessors. The only reference to autochthony in the works of Aristotle is in a very short passage in the *Rhetoric*, where he simply took it to mean "indigenous" without any further discussion on its social thinking: "Noble birth (*eugeneia*)…means that its members or inhabitants are autochthonous…" (1360b30-33). At this point, he seemed to believe that the term autochthony and its myths had already become something with fixed meaning in tradition and thereby a re-consideration of them was almost impossible and also not necessary.

Having studied with Plato, it is very plausible that Aristotle was fully aware of all the variations and manipulations of these myths; however – perhaps to our surprise – Aristotle ignored all of them. On the other hand, such an attitude is understandable. As we can see, Aristotle's neglect of the autochthonous myths derives from his general concern about Greek myth. This pupil of Plato not only inherited his teacher's scepticism towards mythic thought but went even further. He entirely lost his trust in myth. As suggested by Vernant, he no longer took myth as a good way to understand the world

because he no longer considered it intellectual.[1] In *Metaphysics*, he criticises myth writers (whom he called "theologians"): "The school of Hesiod and all the theologians considered only what was convincing to themselves and gave no consideration to us. For they make the first principles of Gods or generated from Gods and say that whatever did not taste of the nectar and ambrosia became mortal – clearly using these terms in a sense significant to themselves; but as regards the actual application of these causes, their statements are beyond our comprehension. […] However, it is not worthwhile to consider seriously the subtleties of mythologists. Let us turn rather to those who reason by means of demonstration." (*Met*. III. 1000 a 11-20)[2] It is such a negative view that marks the death of autochthonous myths in Aristotle's writing.

The situation remained the same after him, and there were no longer mythic conversations concerning autochthony between different agents. "Autochthony" was only understood in its literal sense and its richly mythic voices went silent. Isocrates (436-338 BCE), in his political orations, only used autochthony in a restrictive sense with its meaning of inhabitation; and Demosthenes (384-322 BCE), too, did not mention its mythic aspect at all.[3] Of course there are still writings about autochthonous myths in later texts (as we have seen in chapter 2), but all these writings are just *records* of those popular versions in the past and no critical reflections on autochthony are offered here. Centuries later, when we talk about "autochthony" today either in the area of Classics or in other fields of study such as anthropology, we also tend to focus on its indigenous meaning and overlook its mythic connotations. The once open realm of autochthonous myths has been closed to us.

As we can see, although the term "autochthony" is not unfamiliar to readers even in modern contexts, Athenian myths about it are otherwise a product of their age. We have shown the location of autochthonous myths in history: their popularity coincided with the peak of classical Athens and vanished as Athens' classical power waned.

There are, of course, manifold reasons for the short life of autochthonous myths. On the one hand, the historical and political fall of Athens led to an increasing disappointment towards the idealistic social order imagined by the autochthonous myths;

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[1] Vernant (1980) 192: "Aristotle posing the question… [on] the authors of myths about the gods, with the purpose of emphasising that the distance that separates him from them is not so much temporal as intellectual."
[2] I quoted from Vernant (1980) 192.
[3] *Isoc*. 4. 21-29, 4. 63, 7. 35, 8. 49, 12. 124-125; *Dem*. 19. 261, 60. 4.

and on the other hand, with the shrinking discussion about myth in general, as we have seen in the case of Aristotle, attention to autochthonous myths was considerably reduced. Furthermore, the transformation from oral tradition to written tradition may have finally ended the entire golden age of myth. As we have suggested repeatedly, the vigorous life of myth depends on its nature of mutation and variation – all the lively conversations between mythic narratives must rely on the possibility of narrating myth variously with a self-consciousness of adaption and revision. When myth began to be written down, such flexibility was gradually lost. Textualization leads to standardization and then to canonization. When myths – not only those about autochthony but all other myths as well – were taken as classical texts, their life of change and exchange came to an end.

Although Athenian autochthony suffered from a gloomy afterlife, this by no means reduces its greatness in Greek history. It is unique and significant in many ways. First of all, being one of the most influential discourses in what is often considered as the golden age of Athens, the success of Athenian autochthony is beyond doubt. Second, its influence on the *polis* was not only far-reaching but also profound. As I have shown, autochthony was not only taken as a basis for Athenians to claim their right to inhabit the specific land, but was also developed as a socio-cultural discourse in the form of myth for further intellectual probing. Located in a specific period of history, it is, of course, a non-universal message for human beings; but on the other hand, it is a significantly generalizable message for individuals in history, for whom it becomes a central point of concern which engenders endless conversations. From public oration, vase painting, mythic telling, architectural construction, to literature and even to philosophy, autochthony reached every aspect of social life in Athens; and with its rich, intricate and sophisticated deployment in conversations amongst intellectuals, it serves as an excellent medium for us to see how broad and deep Greek thought through mythic thinking could be.

As I have been at pains to argue, the breadth and depth of its scope is a very special feature of autochthony. This is thanks to its grand perspective in the scope of charter myth: it takes the whole society as its subject and further sets its concern about society within the framework of theology and even cosmology. This endows Athens' exploration of social issues with a wide vision, where heaven and earth, divinity and humanity, world and history are all integrated. In this framework, Athenian thinking about society is shown to be extremely dense and intricate, which provides its social theory with considerable extensibility and potentiality.

Let us now have a brief retrospective of how autochthony powerfully develops social thinking. In my discussion, I have firstly tried to show that the classical form of autochthony formed a response to archaic myths concerning social formation and social order. Whereas in the archaic view, the human world, unlike the divine world, cannot establish a stable social order due to social turbulence triggered by sexual reproduction, erotic desire and sexual conflicts; in autochthony, an optimistic scheme for social order is presented. Through re-narrating myths of social origin, classical autochthony imagined that mankind can imitate divine beings to establish a monistic order in sexual society. Although women, desire and sexual reproduction are still present, by suppressing and subordinating the female to the male, all those potential threats to social order can be controlled in the human world.

However, such an ideal inevitably led to contemporary criticism. Aeschylus and Euripides re-purposed the myths of autochthony to challenge this civic thought. For the tragedians, the very basis of social formation (sexuality, *eros* and social change) itself determines that the human world is an ever-changing society where threats to social order are unable to be removed by simply suppressing or eliminating women, as is imagined in the divine world. Plato, on the other hand, in writing his version of autochthonous myths, made an even harsher response. He not only challenged this civic thought but also put the entire mythic tradition into question. The real difficulty in establishing social order, for Plato, is the problematic mode of social thinking in mythic tradition. Since society from its origin is thought to be formed through social change (sexual reproduction), to establish social order in such a formation is itself undesirable. Therefore, in order to establish a real stable order, the foundation of social formation in traditional thoughts must be changed. Plato proposed to remove erotic desire – the very motivation for uncontrollable sexual reproduction and thus unstable social change – from both the divine world and human society, so that social order could be established rationally and orderly from the very beginning.

Plato explored fully the depth and strength of autochthony, but it is still hard to say that this philosopher has ultimately offered a plausible social scheme. In effect, Plato's version of autochthony is by no means less idealistic and constructive than the traditional ones, since his ideal society is founded on the conditions that: firstly, all people, men and women, old and young, intellectual and ordinary, should believe in his surprising new idea of social formation, human nature, cosmic origin and divine authority; secondly,

these people should firmly follow his new justice system without any attempt to offend the rule of philosopher kings; thirdly, there are philosophers who would like to rule and who are allowed to rule; fourthly, the entire city could start from the very beginning, killing all the old generation and creating a new generation which has never received traditional education, as is proposed by Plato's Socrates himself; and fifthly, erotic desire can really be removed from human life. To achieve any one of these conditions is by no means easy, let alone all of them. Therefore, even though Plato himself ambiguously left a space for the realization of his ideal city in the *Republic* – "it is difficult although not impossible" (*Rep*. 499c-d) – this theoretical construction is in essence almost unachievable in reality. As we can see in his later works, especially in the *Laws*, Plato changed this scheme considerably to a more realistic one, and *eros* was brought back to his "second-best" society. Therefore, it would not be surprising that so many readers of the *Republic* take this work as a utopian recast which is full of irony, and agree that this work indicates not a real resolution to the tensions between the human world and the divine world, order and disorder, male and female; instead, it reveals these tensions and their complex position.

Throughout the thesis, we thus see this paradox again and again: on the one hand, mankind spares no effort to construct social order against human nature; but on the other hand, such an effort is repeatedly revealed to be a failure. But it is notable that, even with this tragic view, Greeks seem never to have flinched from the bleakness of human nature. Instead, they took the courage to face the tragic truth consciously and keep trying their utmost for a better life. Autochthony is one of the outstanding cases. Although, as we have seen, its attempt for social order is constantly challenged and questioned, this series of myths, with all its variations and mutations, presents us with a very vibrant picture, in which the intricacy, depth, and strength of Greek thinking are vividly shown. In the tragic world of human beings, no matter how hard it might be, Greeks always aimed at a better future and made the greatest effort to approach the most ideal world that they could ever imagine.

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